

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION IN KOREA

Consequences for the Region

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I wish to thank my supervisor, Dr. James Clapper. I had the honour of studying under Dr. Clapper for two years, as an undergraduate. He has provided keen and insightful comments on several drafts of this subthesis. It has been a privilege for me to work under

I certify that this subthesis is my own work and that all sources have been acknowledged.

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One final word: any faults in this subthesis are solely my responsibility.

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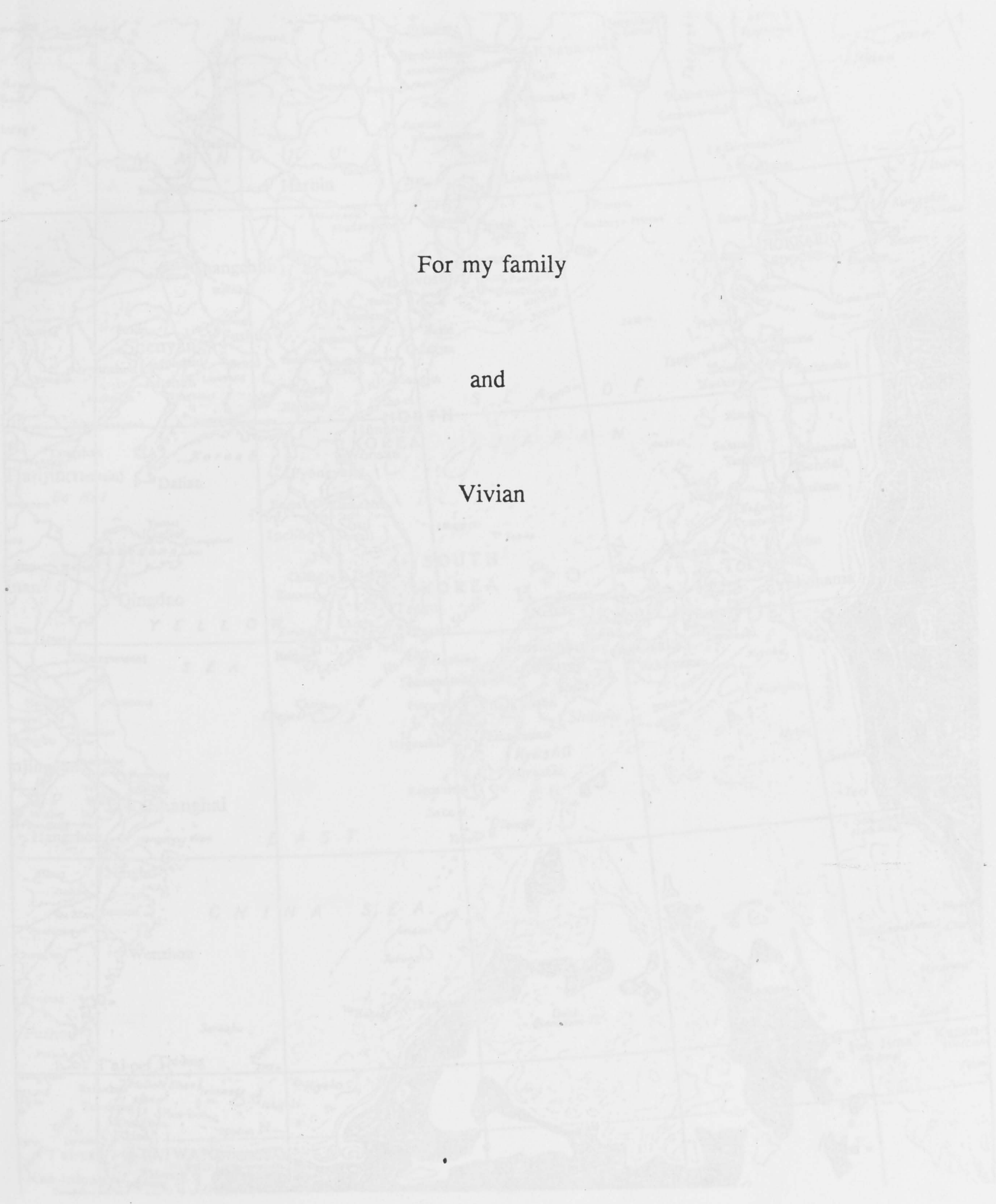
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For my family

and

Vivian

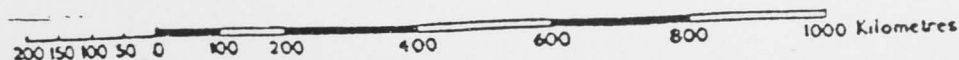
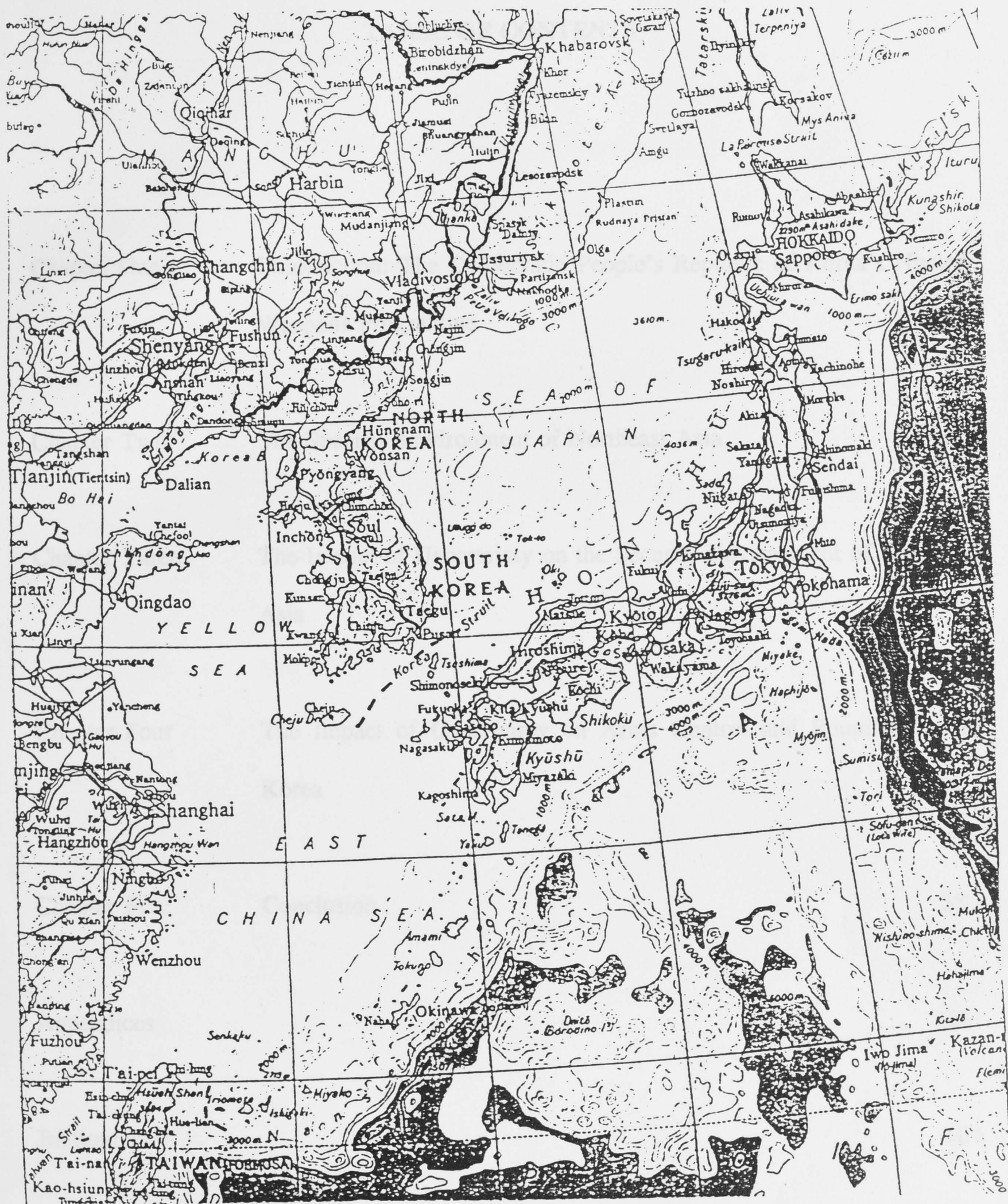


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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
C ³	Command, Control and Communications
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
DCRK	Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DMZ	De-Militarized Zone
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
KPA	Korean People's Army
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
NAP	Non-Aggression Pact
NIC	Newly Industrializing Country
NNPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NWFZ	Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROKAF	Republic of Korea Armed Forces
TBT	Test Ban Treaty
UNC	United Nations Command
USA	United States of America

USFJ	United States Forces in Japan
USFK	United States Forces in Korea
USN	United States Navy
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CHAPTER ONE

The issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK)¹ nuclear energy programme has attracted much international attention. The concern has revolved around the potential for the DPRK to use this nuclear energy programme for military purposes; in other words, the issue is whether or not the DPRK has any ambitions to acquire nuclear weapons. International concern has been motivated by the DPRK's refusal to sign the Safeguards Agreement, despite having signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT).

It is worth remembering that both Koreas, the DPRK and the Republic of Korea (ROK)², are technically still at war with each other;³ in this context, the nuclearization of Korea is potentially a most destabilizing development. But this may already be a foregone conclusion.⁴ The ROK, long suspected of having nuclear ambitions, has a substantial nuclear energy programme under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) guidelines which can quickly be transformed for military use. The DPRK is known to have two small experimental nuclear reactors supplied by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

¹ The DPRK is also referred to as North Korea.

² The ROK is also referred to as South Korea.

³ Frank Downs, "The Politics of Division", in *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter* (hereafter *APDR*), July 1990, Vol. XVII, No.1, pp.15-16.

⁴ Kihl Young Whan, "The Korean Peninsula Conflict: Equilibrium or Deescalation?", in Lawrence Ginter and Kihl Young Whan (eds.), *East Asian Conflict Zones: Prospects for Regional Stability and Deescalation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), pp.112-13.

INTRODUCTION

THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA'S

NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAMME

The issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK¹) nuclear energy programme has attracted much international attention. The concern has revolved around the potential for the DPRK to use this nuclear energy programme for military purposes; in other words, the issue is whether or not the DPRK has any ambitions to acquire nuclear weapons. International concern has been motivated by the DPRK's refusal to sign the Safeguards Agreement, despite having signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT).

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under IAEA and NPT conditions⁵; a third plant at Yongbyon - the cause for concern - was detected in 1985. United States Forces in Korea (USFK) probably deploy tactical nuclear weapons as well.⁶ During the Korean War, the USA apparently contemplated using nuclear weapons, although primarily against the USSR and the People's Republic of China (PRC).⁷

It is unclear if the DPRK would want nuclear weapons in the first place. Gary Klintworth has suggested that the DPRK may not have any nuclear ambitions.⁸ Kim Jong Il, the heir apparent to Kim Il Sung⁹, has stated that the DPRK needs to concentrate on the problems of economic modernization.¹⁰ Recently, Kim Il Sung stated that the DPRK did not have any nuclear ambitions.¹¹ In a letter to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in November 1990, the DPRK reiterated its aim of making the Korean peninsula a

⁵ "Major Expansion of Yongbyon Nuclear Plant Reported by Kyodo, Yonhap", in *Summary of World Broadcasts/Far East/0685* (hereafter *SWB/FE*), 10 Feb 1990. The USSR supplied two small reactors under the express conditions that these reactors are specifically for peaceful purposes. A discussion of Soviet policy regarding nuclear aid to other countries will be presented later in this chapter.

⁶ Vladimir I. Ivanov, "Soviet View of the Military Confrontation in the Western Pacific", in *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Spring 1990, Vol. XXI, No. 1, pp. 59-60.

⁷ Roger Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy During the Korean War", in *International Security*, Winter 1988, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 50-91; and Rosemary J. Foot, "Nuclear Coercion and the Ending of the Korean Conflict", in *International Security*, Winter 1988, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 92-112.

⁸ Gary Klintworth, "The Yin and Tang of Pyongyang Diplomacy", in *The Australian*, 18 May 1990.

⁹ The name of the DPRK President has also been spelt Kim Il-sung, Kim Il-song and Kim Il Song by various scholars. In this study, the name will be spelt Kim Il Sung. It should be noted that in Korean culture, the family name precedes the individual's name. This practice will be followed in this study.

¹⁰ "Let Us Continue to Vigorously Launch the 3 August Campaign for Production of People's Consumer Goods", in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service-East Asia-90-153* (hereafter *FBIS-EAS*), 8 Aug 1990.

¹¹ "Kim Denies Nuclear Capability", in *FBIS-EAS-90-188*, 27 Sept 1990.

nuclear weapons-free zone (NWFZ).¹² The DPRK has repeatedly called for the withdrawal of USFK nuclear weapons from the ROK. The DPRK recently appeared to grant two concessions to the ROK on this issue: it now agrees with the ROK's call for a nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons-free zone in Korea;¹³ the DPRK also allegedly agreed to allow inspection of its nuclear facilities once USFK nuclear weapons are totally withdrawn.¹⁴ However, until such inspection is actually carried out, it is likely that fears regarding the possibility of a nuclear-armed DPRK will continue to haunt policy-makers in the ROK. It is worth noting that the DPRK has since then denied that it would sign the Safeguards Agreement after US nuclear weapons are withdrawn from the ROK.¹⁵

The military doctrines of the Korean People's Army (KPA), the DPRK's armed forces, also suggest that nuclear weapons have no place in KPA strategy. There appears to be two schools of thought on this issue: one school argues that the KPA's strategic and tactical doctrines are influenced by the Soviet Red Army, with the emphasis on maintaining the offensive;¹⁶ the other argues that KPA strategy emphasizes guerilla action.¹⁷ Neither interpretation indicates that nuclear weapons would fit into the prevailing KPA strategy.

The DPRK, along with the PRC, had criticized the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (TBT)

¹² Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 16 November 1990.

¹³ "North Korea eases stand on call for N-free zone", in *Bangkok Post*, 21 Nov 1991.

¹⁴ See "North Korea ready for nuclear inspection", in *The Nation*, 23 Nov 1991.

¹⁵ "N.Korea denies it will sign Naccord", in *Bangkok Post*, 26 Nov 1991.

¹⁶ Marko Milivojevic, "The Korean People's Army", in *Armed Forces*, June 1987, Vol.6, No.6, pp.261-2. Evidence of this is seen in the KPA's emphasis on tank and armoured forces. At the same time, the KPA lacks the kind of artillery that can fire nuclear artillery shells.

¹⁷ "Article Examines KPA's Formation", in *FBIS-EAS-90-149*, 2 Aug 1990.

between the United States of America (USA) and the USSR as an attempt by the superpowers to establish a monopoly on nuclear weapons.¹⁸ However, the DPRK's objection was raised in support of the PRC in the context of the Sino-Soviet conflict. Recently, the DPRK threatened, both obliquely and openly, to acquire nuclear weapons. When Soviet-ROK diplomatic relations were being established, the DPRK threatened to "to provide ourselves some weapons for which we have so far relied upon the alliance."¹⁹ The DPRK has also threatened to build nuclear weapons if USSR-ROK relations were to improve further.²⁰ In the past, in response to US pressure to sign the Safeguards Agreement, the DPRK stated that this was an issue strictly between the IAEA and the DPRK.²¹ At the start of 1991, the ROK Defense Minister warned that the DPRK will acquire nuclear weapons by 1995, as it is expected to secure a large amount of plutonium soon.²²

Obstacles to Proliferation

However, the NPT and the Safeguards Agreement pose as serious obstacles facing any state with nuclear ambitions; states that have endorsed the NPT are bound to refrain from

¹⁸ Ralph N. Clough *Embattled Korea: The Rivalry for International Support* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1978), p.248.

¹⁹ "Soviet Diplomatic Moves with ROK Criticised", in *FBIS-EAS-90-182*, 19 Sept 1990. According to Andrew Mack, these "weapons mentioned could only be nuclear weapons". See Andrew Mack, "North Korea and the Bomb", in *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1991, No.83, p.89.

²⁰ "N Korea 'will build nuclear weapons'", in *Jane's Defence Weekly* (hereafter *JDW*), 12 Jan 1991. Also see "Moscow, Seoul links spur N.Korea threat", in *The Washington Times*, 2 Jan 1991.

²¹ "DPRK, U.S. Embassies Discuss Korea", in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service-China-90-007* (hereafter *FBIS-CHI*), 10 Jan 1990.

²² "South Korean Defence Minister on threat from North", in *SWB/FE/0981*, 28 Jan 1991.

aiding horizontal nuclear proliferation.²³ The main obstacles to nuclear proliferation are the acquisition of nuclear weapons materials and the design and fabrication of explosives.²⁴ As a signatory, the USSR is thus bound to the NPT. Gerald Segal has argued that both the USSR and the PRC have strong interests in the NPT and IAEA.²⁵ However, neither France nor the PRC, existing nuclear powers, have signed the NPT.

The USSR has been seen as an avid supporter of the NPT and the Safeguards Agreement. This was motivated by the ease in which the PRC "transformed Soviet nuclear aid into a weapons programme".²⁶ Present recipients of Soviet nuclear aid are subject to stringent conditions designed to prevent further horizontal nuclear proliferation.²⁷ In terms of the Korean peninsula, the USSR has supported measures to lower military tensions; for instance, the USSR has supported calls for the establishment of a Korean NWFZ.²⁸

However, despite these obstacles, it may still be possible for the DPRK to acquire a simple nuclear device.²⁹ The technical specifications for such a simple nuclear device are

²³ *The Regulation of Nuclear Trade Vol. 1: International Aspects* (hereafter *Nuclear Trade*) (France: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1988), p.53. The term "horizontal nuclear proliferation" refers to the spread of nuclear weapons to previously non-nuclear states.

²⁴ Lewis A. Dunn, "Nuclear Nonproliferation: A Defense In-depth", in Jed C. Snyder and Samuel F. Wells(eds.), *Limiting Nuclear Proliferation* (Cambridge: Massachussetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1985), pp.283-99.

²⁵ Gerald Segal, *Rethinking the Pacific* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p.262.

²⁶ William C. Potter, "Soviet Nuclear Export Policy", in *Limiting Nuclear Proliferation*, pp.217-52.

²⁷ For instance, all recipients of Soviet nuclear aid are bound to acquire nuclear fuel from the USSR, and to return all spent nuclear fuel rods to the USSR.

²⁸ "Shevardnadze Urges Koreas to Reach Agreements", in *FBIS-EAS-90-171*, 4 Sept 1990.

²⁹ Frank Barnaby, *Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Growing Threat in the 1990s?* Conflict Studies 235, October/November 1990, pp.1-5.

already available in the open literature. The materials for such a device also appear to be easily acquired, either by reprocessing spent reactor fuel or from an alleged black market in plutonium. The technology required for constructing a reprocessing plant is also in the open literature.

It has been estimated that the DPRK could produce enough plutonium for at least one nuclear weapon a year.³⁰ Other estimates indicate that the DPRK may already have enough plutonium to manufacture between 13 to 33 Hiroshima-type nuclear weapons.³¹ Not surprisingly, at the last NPT Review Conference, the ROK delegate urged the DPRK to comply with the NPT and IAEA regimes.³²

HOW THE DPRK COULD ACQUIRE NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The USSR and the PRC

Two broadcasts by Radio Moscow in March and April 1989 indicated Soviet aid in the DPRK's nuclear energy programme:³³

"A nuclear power plant, the first of its kind in (north) Korea, are among the new industrial projects the Soviet Union help (north) Korea construct . . .";

and,

"Some 30 (north) Korean scholars and engineers are trained at Dubna

³⁰ "U.S, USSR Worry Over DPRK Nuclear Development", in *FBIS-EAS-90-078*, 23 April 1990.

³¹ "Pyongyang 'could produce 33 Hiroshima-type A-bombs'", in *The Korea Herald*, 7 Oct 1989. However, it must be remembered that in the case of nuclear fuel from the USSR, the DPRK would be obliged to return all the spent nuclear fuel rods to the USSR.

³² "South Urges North to Sign IAEA Safeguards", in *FBIS-EAS-90-165*, 24 Aug 1990.

³³ "Is Pyongyang Capable of Producing Nuclear Weapons?", in *Vantage Point* (hereafter VP), May 1989, Vol.XII, No.5, pp.18-21.

Combined Nuclear Institute in the Soviet Union. Many north Korean nuclear physicists have studied together with Soviet scientists since 1956 when the institute was founded."

In December 1985, the USSR agreed to provide aid in the construction of a new 1760 megawatt nuclear power plant in the DPRK. This was after Kim Il Sung visited the USSR in 1984, a visit apparently motivated by Kim Il Sung's concern regarding the growing military power of the ROK.³⁴ The DPRK's apparent initial reluctance to acquire nuclear technology changed in 1984, with a reported agreement with the USSR regarding the transfer of nuclear technology to the DPRK.³⁵

That does not mean that the USSR would aid the DPRK's alleged quest for nuclear weapons. The USSR pressed the DPRK to sign the NPT; the 1760 megawatt nuclear plant was the reward for the DPRK's compliance.³⁶ From 1989 to mid-1990, the USSR apparently suspended all major arms shipments to the DPRK;³⁷ construction of the 1760 megawatt nuclear plant was also affected by this suspension.³⁸ The USSR has apparently suspended all arms supplies to the DPRK again, according to ROK sources.³⁹ It will be

³⁴ Li Gye-hee, "The Changing Pattern of North Korea's Relations with China and the USSR (I)", in *VP*, May 1988, Vol.XI, No.5, pp.5-7. Also see "Soviets Now Deeply Involved in North Korea Militarily/Economically - Mockery of *Juche* (Self-Reliance)", in *VP*, Sept 1988, Vol.XI, No.9, p.15.

³⁵ Li Ki-taek, "Soviet Military Policy in the Far East and its Impact on North Korea (II)", in *VP*, May 1989, Vol.XII, No.5, pp.2-3.

³⁶ Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., "North Korea - set to join the nuclear club?", in *JDW*, 23 Sept 1989, Vol.2, No.12, p.597.

³⁷ "The forgotten Far East" in *US News and World Report*, 23 April 1990. Also see "USSR Suspends Modern Weapons to North Korea", in *FBIS-EAS-90-165*, 24 Aug 1990.

³⁸ "USSR Suspends Help to DPRK Nuclear Plant", in *FBIS-EAS-90-141*, 23 July 1990.

³⁹ "Moscow suspends arms supplies to Pyongyang: Report", in *ST*, 31 Oct 1991.

argued later that a nuclear-armed DPRK is not in the USSR's interests.

However, the extent of the USSR's involvement in the DPRK's alleged nuclear ambitions remains unclear. The USSR pressed the DPRK into accepting the NPT after the USA indicated to the USSR its suspicions of the Yongbyon reactor's military potential.⁴⁰ Japanese security analysts also allege that Soviet military aid to the DPRK could possibly include nuclear aid.⁴¹

It is possible that the DPRK could have received aid in acquiring nuclear weapons from the PRC.⁴² The PRC does have a questionable record in terms of nuclear aid;⁴³ and, as already pointed out, the PRC has also not endorsed the NPT. However, in the case of Korea, given the PRC's emphasis on economic modernization, the PRC would not want to anger either the USA or the ROK by providing any nuclear assistance to the DPRK. Once proof of the PRC's hand in the DPRK's alleged nuclear ambitions became obvious, this would jeopardize PRC-ROK trade, now totalling about US\$2 billion a year.⁴⁴ For other reasons, the PRC may also have serious reservations about a nuclear-armed DPRK.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ "Status of North Korean Nuclear Facilities", in *Arms Control Reporter*, July 1990, p.457.

⁴¹ "USSR Reportedly Continuing Aid to N.Korea", in *FBIS-EAS-90-235*, 6 Dec 1990.

⁴² Joseph S. Bermudez Jr, "North Korea's Nuclear Programme", in *Jane's Intelligence Review* (hereafter *JIR*), Summer 1991, p.408.

⁴³ For instance, US intelligence sources appear to indicate that the PRC had provided Iran with nuclear technologies and materials vital to the construction of nuclear weapons. See "China 'sold Iran device for making enriched uranium'", in *The Straits Times* (hereafter *ST*), 31 Oct 1991.

⁴⁴ "The Republic of Korea", in *Defense and Diplomacy*, May 1990, Vol.8, No.5, pp.57-8.

⁴⁵ For instance, a nuclear-armed DPRK would be less amenable to PRC attempts to control the former's policies. Such a development would thus be contrary to the PRC's perception of its strategic interests.

In any case, the PRC is increasingly unlikely and unable to provide the DPRK with the logistical support and high-technology weaponry the latter has sought.⁴⁶ It is contended in this study that a nuclear-armed DPRK is contrary to the PRC's interests in Northeast Asia. The PRC may have a stake in a DPRK maintained as a buffer state against the USFK.⁴⁷ A militarily strong DPRK may be inimical to the PRC's strategic interests.

Other Sources

Several West European countries could have provided the DRPK with key nuclear aid. The former Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) had a poor record of lax export control measures, allowing key nuclear technologies to be exported to other states seeking various weapons of mass destruction.⁴⁸ The FRG may have aided in the development of an amphibious capability in the KPA.⁴⁹ Another potential source, France, recently declared its intention to work closely with the ROK in preventing horizontal nuclear proliferation in Korea.⁵⁰ The DPRK could also have secretly acquired nuclear aid from such countries as

⁴⁶ "The Republic of Korea", pp.57-8. Also see Dale Bumpers, "Time for New Thinking in South Korea", in *The Baltimore Sun*, 1 May 1990; and "North Korea-USSR Military Ties Strengthening", in *VP*, Oct 1989, Vol.XII, No.10, p.11.

⁴⁷ Gerald Segal and Anne Gilks, "China and the Arms Trade", in *Arms Control: The Journal of Arms Control and Disarmament*, Dec 1985, Vol.6, No.3, pp.262-71.

⁴⁸ Sam Bennett, "How nations gain nuclear capability", in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 April 1990. Such weapons of mass destruction include chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

⁴⁹ G. Jacobs, "North Korea's Growing Amphibious Warfare Capability", in *Jane's Soviet Intelligence Review* (hereafter *JSIR*), Oct 1990, Vol.2, No.10, p.167.

⁵⁰ "Yi Sang-hun, France View DPRK Nuclear Arms", in *FBIS-EAS-90-135*, 3 Aug 1990.

Egypt, the former German Democratic Republic, Iran, Libya, Romania or Syria.⁵¹

Evidence also suggests, albeit tenuously, that the DPRK may be able to produce nuclear weapons indigenously.⁵² For instance, the technical specifications for Great Britain's Magnox reactor, a noted producer of weapons-grade plutonium, have been declassified.⁵³ The Yongbyon reactor could be a virtual replica of the Magnox reactor. Despite the DPRK's *juche* (self-reliance) ideology, technical cooperation with foreign corporations is allowed.⁵⁴

However, it remains unclear if the level of science and technology in the DPRK would be able to support an indigenous nuclear weapons programme. Given the secretive nature of the DPRK, no definitive statement can be made. However, the fact that science and technology have been hampered by a slavish devotion to ideology does not augur well for such efforts.⁵⁵

This study does not seek to answer the question of whether or not the DPRK has any

⁵¹ Bermudez, "North Korea's nuclear programme", p.410.

⁵² "Pyongyang on Verge of Producing Nuclear Weapons", in *VP*, July 1989, Vol.XII, No.7, pp.11-13.

⁵³ Bermudez, "North Korea - set to join the nuclear club?", p.594.

⁵⁴ Shinn Rinn-Sup, "Political Trends in North Korea and their Implications for Inter-Korean Relations", in *Korea Observer*, Winter 1988, Vol.XIX, No.4, p.414. According to Robert Scalapino, the DPRK made its first attempt to turn outwards in 1972-73. See Robert A. Scalapino, "Asia's Future", in *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1987, Vol.66, No.1, pp.80-1.

⁵⁵ Kim Jong-hum, "The Level of North Korea's Science and Technology", in *VP*, Aug 1988, Vol.XI, No.8, pp.1-10.

nuclear ambitions. That has ably done by other analysts.⁵⁶ Rather, this study aims to examine the impact of the current uncertainties about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions on the security environment of Northeast Asia. Chapter Two will show that the current security environment in Northeast Asia does not favour the DPRK in the long run. The balance of military power in Korea probably still favours the DPRK. However, given the stronger ROK economy, the balance will probably swing in the ROK's favour in the near future. The ROK has also established relations with many former DPRK allies, such as the USSR; this merely confirms the trend in the security environment against the DPRK. This chapter will also present a brief analysis of the concepts of regional security and interdependence.

In Chapter Three, the impact of existing uncertainties about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions on the Northeast Asian security environment will be explored. The chapter will focus on how the states involved in this region have been affected by the DPRK's alleged nuclear ambitions. It will be argued here that a nuclear-capable DPRK is not in the interests of the major powers in the region.

Chapter Four will study the impact the current uncertainties has had on the inter-related processes of arms control and reunification in Korea. It will be argued that both processes have suffered, as a result of the current uncertainties. However, this chapter will also suggest that neither process stood much chance of success in the first place. Chapter Five will conclude this study.

⁵⁶ See, for instance, Mack, "North Korea and the bomb"; Bermudez, "North Korea - set to join the nuclear club?"; and Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Programme".

CHAPTER TWO

In this chapter, the security environment of Northeast Asia will be analyzed. The security environment refers to the inter-state relationships in the region which impact upon the security of individual states. The significant variables in the security environment are politics, military power and economics.¹ In the era of the so-called Cold War, two security blocs (for lack of a better term), existed: the USSR, the PRC, and the DPRK, on the one hand; and the USA, Japan, and the ROK on the other. However, even during the Cold War, a complex web of interrelationships existed between the two blocs.

Interdependence and Regional Security

However, before any discussion of the Northeast Asian security environment can be undertaken, a brief discussion of the concepts of regional security and interdependence is required. In this discussion, security interdependence refers to a relationship of mutual vulnerability between states, such that they need to cooperate in order to satisfy individual security needs.² For instance, the USA, Japan and the ROK perceive the need to cooperate to satisfy individual and shared security needs.

Simultaneously, security interdependence involves relations between antagonistic states. No state can enhance its own security, vis-a-vis its adversary, without affecting negatively

¹ These states include the two Koreas, Japan, the PRC, the USSR and the USA.

² James W. Morley, "The Structure of Regional Power", in James W. Morley (ed.), *Security Interdependence in the Asia Pacific Region* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1986), pp.6-10. Because economic issues have become a significant variable of the security environment, states have to consider their economic interests in conceptualizing their security concerns. This is relevant to Northeast Asia.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.14-15.

THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT OF NORTHEAST ASIA

In this chapter, the security environment of Northeast Asia will be analyzed. The security environment refers to the inter-state relationships in the region¹ which impact upon the security of individual states. The significant variables in the security environment are politics, military power and economics.² In the era of the so-called Cold War, two security blocs (for lack of a better term), existed: the USSR, the PRC, and the DPRK, on the one hand; and the USA, Japan, and the ROK on the other. However, even during the Cold War, a complex web of interrelationships existed between the two blocs.

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Simultaneously, security interdependence involves relations between antagonistic states. No state can enhance its own security, *vis-a-vis* its adversary, without affecting negatively

¹ These states include the two Koreas, Japan, the PRC, the USSR and the USA.

² James W. Morley, "The Structure of Regional Power", in James W. Morley(ed.), *Security Interdependence in the Asia Pacific Region* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1986), pp.6-10. Because economic issues have become a significant variable of the security environment, states have to consider their economic interests in conceptualizing their security concerns. This is relevant to Northeast Asia.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.14-15.

the security of its adversary. Hence the ROK cannot enhance its security without affecting negatively the DPRK's security. Regional security thus refers to such relationships of security interdependence between the regional actors. Having said that, both Korean states apparently perceive security as a zero sum game; security is sought through unilateral measures. Balance of power thus becomes an important consideration in Northeast Asia.

THE GREAT POWERS⁴ AND KOREA

It should be noted "Korea's security has [historically] depended on the power configuration in Northeast Asia."⁵ Korea served as the historical invasion route for rival empires in Northeast Asia.⁶ Korea is often seen as a potential dagger pointed at either the PRC or Japan,⁷ thus affecting superpower interests in these two states. Consequently, the great powers share a common desire for peace and stability in Korea.⁸

Improved inter-state relations have meant a less conflictual and tense region.⁹ It may

⁴ This term will be used to refer to the USA, the USSR, the PRC and Japan.

⁵ Kim Sang Joon, "The Security of Small Countries: The Case for the Republic of Korea", in *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Autumn 1990, Vol.XXI, No.3, p.383.

⁶ Segal, *Rethinking the Pacific*, p.130.

⁷ Kim Kook-chin, "The Pivotal Security Linkage between the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Fall 1985, Vol.9, No.3, pp.491-2.

⁸ Clough, *Embattled Korea*, ch.7.

⁹ Kihl Young Whan, "The Korean Peninsula and Security Dilemma in the late 1980s" (hereafter "Korean Peninsula"), in Kihl Young Whan and Lawrence E. Grinter(eds.), *Security, Strategy and Policy Responses in the Pacific Rim* (hereafter *Security, Strategy and Policy Responses*) (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), p.141. Also see Baek Jong-chun, "North Korea's Military Policy and the Peace Process on the Korean Peninsula", in *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Summer/Fall 1990, Vol.IV, No.2, pp.211-3.

even be argued that a sense of a Pacific community has emerged.¹⁰ In particular, there has been increased Asian self-awareness, increasing prosperity and increasing economic interdependence and interaction. These developments have allowed for accommodating, non-antagonistic relations between states. However, the improved superpower relationship will not necessarily result in stability in Korea. As such, the great powers have great incentives to work towards the creation of an NWFZ in Korea.¹¹

The USSR and the PRC

Both states have to come to terms with the so-called Newly-Industrializing Countries (NICs), especially the ROK.¹² The normalization of Sino-Soviet relations has apparently had a positive impact on the Northeast Asian security environment, allowing both states to decrease military spending, replace military with economic ties, decrease the level of Sino-Soviet competition for the DPRK's support, and seek and consolidate linkages and economic ties with the ROK.¹³

At the same time, both states regard inter-Korean dialogue as an important means of lowering inter-Korean tensions.¹⁴ The old Sino-Soviet competition for influence in the

¹⁰ John W. Lewis, "Defining the Strategic Context in Asia: Regional Change and the Prospects for Peace in Korea", in *Korea Journal*, July 1989, Vol.29, No.7, pp.30-9.

¹¹ Lawrence E. Grinter, "Policy of the United States Toward East Asia: Tough Adjustments", in *Security, Strategy and Policy Responses*, p.34.

¹² Gerald Segal, *The Soviet Union and the Pacific* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, Inc., 1990), pp.188-94.

¹³ Banh Chan Young, "Prospect of Korean-Soviet Economic Cooperation and Its Impact on Security and Stability of the Korean Peninsula", in *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Autumn 1990, Vol.XXI, No.3, pp.319-20.

¹⁴ "PRC Hopes for North, South Talks Noted", in *FBIS-CHI-90-172*, 5 Sept 1990.

DPRK has been replaced by the realization of common interests in the status quo in Korea.¹⁵ By ensuring their continuing ability to influence DPRK policy, both great powers hope to prevent the DPRK from destabilizing the region. The trade relations both great powers now have with the ROK also gives both states a stake in the political and economic viability of both Korean states.¹⁶

That does not mean neither would not welcome a unified Korea.¹⁷ Nonetheless, two caveats must temper this point: the Sino-Soviet relationship is now more cooperative than adversarial; and a unified Korea would not be amenable to either Soviet or Chinese influence.¹⁸ In any case, a unified Korea may not necessarily be in the interests of either state. It is worth noting at this point that Soviet and Chinese interests in Northeast Asia also consist of conflicting and contradicting elements, which affect how these great powers view the region.

For the USSR, the security environment has improved dramatically since the early 1980s.¹⁹ The USSR has also ceased to "idealise 'socialist international relations'".²⁰

¹⁵ Gary Klintworth, "China's Security Policy", in *Security, Strategy and Policy Responses*, p.108.

¹⁶ Giovanni Graziani, *Gorbachev's Economic Strategy in the Third World* The Washington Papers 142 (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990).

¹⁷ Young Hon Kang, "Security Policy", in Koo Youngnok and Han Soonjoo(eds.), *The Foreign Policy of the Republic of Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp.53-4.

¹⁸ Were Korea to be unified under Kim Il Sung, there would be less reason for Kim to continue to seek the patronage of either great power. A Korea unified under the ROK would not be amenable to Soviet or Chinese influence either.

¹⁹ Robert A. Scalapino, "Asia in a Global Context: Strategic Issues for the Soviet Union", in Richard H. Solomon and Masataka Kosaka(eds.), *The Soviet Far East Military Buildup: Nuclear Dilemmas and Asian Security* (Dover, Massachusetts: Auburn House Publishing Company, 1986), pp.21-39. Also see Segal, *The Soviet Union and the Pacific*, pp.97-9.

Clearly, the USSR would like to see such trends continuing. Increasing tension or another war in Korea may damage Soviet efforts at consolidating its relations with the other East Asian states, in particular, economic relations with the ROK, which is important for *perestroika*.²¹ Thus, the USSR has been the main initiator of arms control proposals in Northeast Asia.²² To some extent, Soviet initiatives appear to be motivated by its perception of its disadvantageous position *vis-a-vis* the other regional great powers. It may also be linked to Soviet perceptions of the need to protect vital security interests here.²³

The PRC argues that its relations with the two Koreas should enhance regional peace and stability.²⁴ The PRC is aware that another Korean war would probably involve the PRC.²⁵ The PRC thus supports all NWFZ proposals in Korea.²⁶ The considerations that influence Soviet policy in Korea are also equally applicable to the PRC.

The USA and Japan

²⁰ Nina G. Golovyatenko and Artem Yu. Rudnitsky, "In Search of Soviet Policy in the Pacific", in *The Pacific Review*, Vol.3, No.3, 1990, p.204.

²¹ This would be due to the strong anti-Soviet sentiments in the ROK.

²² Bonnie S. Glasser, "Soviet, Chinese and US perspectives on arms control in North-East Asia", in *Security and arms control*, pp.166-90.

²³ Banning S. Garret, "Gorbachev's reassessment of Soviet security needs: Implications for North-East Asia", in *Security and arms control*, pp.50-69. These security interests include the need to protect the sea lines of communications (SLOC), as well as the ballistic submarine bases in the sea of Okhotsk.

²⁴ State Council Spokesman Yuan Mu Interviewed", *FBIS-CHI-90-148*, 1 Aug 1990.

²⁵ Cha Young-koo, "Strategic Environment of Northeast Asia: A Korean Perspective", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Summer 1986, Vol.10, No.2, p.292.

²⁶ "Qian Qichen Clarifies 'Disarmament Stand'", in *FBIS-CHI-90-043*, 5 March 1990. Also see "Diplomat on Nuclear Proliferation Responsibility", in *FBIS-CHI-90-122*, 25 June 1990.

The US military presence in Northeast Asia looks set to change.²⁷ The Nunn-Warner amendment to the fiscal year 1990-91 defense authorization bill gave several provisions:

- a. the reassessment of the force structure, missions and location of the USFK;
- b. regular ROK-USA negotiations on the feasibility of USFK reductions; and
- c. a five-year plan on restructuring the USFK into a supporting role in the defense of the ROK.

Most significantly, the amendment provided a timetable for USFK withdrawals.²⁸ The DPRK response to this amendment will be discussed in Chapter Four. The likelihood of these changes has been enhanced by the recent ROK-USA agreement for the ROK to maintain facilities providing logistical support for US troops in the event of another Korean war.²⁹ Several other factors also permit the reduction, if not withdrawal, of the USFK: the USA-ROK mutual security treaty (See Appendix Three), and the Korean military balance.³⁰

It should be noted that planned reductions in US military spending on the ROK do not affect US commitments to ROK security; it merely reflects the need for the USA to decrease military spending. This is due to several factors, including the changing superpower relationship and the worsening US economy. At the same time, given the ROK's increasing

²⁷ Kihl Young Whan, "Re-examining the United States Security Role in Korea: The Politics of Troop Reduction and Defense Burden Share", in *Korea Observer*, Oct 1990, Vol.30, No.10, pp.48-50.

²⁸ The USFK would be withdrawn in three stages: 1991-93, where 1000 USAF personnel and 5000 US Army personnel from support and headquarters (HQ) functions would be withdrawn; and flexible withdrawal schedules for the 1994-95 and post-1996 stages.

²⁹ "Security Council Meeting With U.S. Reported", in *FBIS-EAS-90-010*, 15 Jan 1990.

³⁰ Ralph N. Clough, "U.S.-Korean Relations in the year 2000", in Han Sung-joo and Robert J. Myers(eds.), *Korea: The Year 2000* (hereafter *Korea*) (Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 1987), pp.27-8.

economic power, US security interests in the state have increased as well.

To some extent, US interests in Northeast Asia are linked to its worldwide interests; in the event of a European war, the aim of the US would be to "keep the Pacific pacific".³¹ Japan and the ROK, as key elements in the US military-industrial complex, would be the focus of US strategy in the Pacific. Such thinking on the Korean situation reflects the classic Cold War logic of the 1950s.³²

Korea remains vital to the security of Japan.³³ The Japanese plan to restore the 1% ceiling on defense spending thus indicates Japan's perception of a more stable security environment. In particular, the traditional basis of Japanese defense spending - in support of US military efforts against the USSR - has been eroded by recent developments in the USSR and USSR-Japan relations.³⁴ But Japan continues to contribute to regional security and stability through the continued presence of US forces in Japan (USFJ) and Japanese economic aid to other regional countries.³⁵

THE DPRK AND THE GREAT POWERS

In the case of the DPRK, policy is very much shaped by the dispositions and interests of Kim Il Sung. One objective of the *juche* ideology is the legitimization of Kim's regime,

³¹ James R. Kurth, "The United States and the North Pacific", in *Security and arms control*, pp.27-49. Kurth argues that the Korean war was fought partly to demonstrate the credibility of US security commitments to Europe.

³² Doug Bandow, "Seoul Long", in *The American Spectator*, Nov 1990.

³³ *Defense of Japan 1989* (Japan: Japan Defense Agency, 1989), pp.56-61.

³⁴ "Japan is Moving to Scale Back Military Spending", in *The New York Times*, 12 Dec 1990.

³⁵ Michael Leifer, "External Relationships and Political Stability", in *Security Interdependence in the Asia Pacific Region*, p.164.

as well as the virtually inevitable hereditary succession of Kim Jong Il.³⁶ It will be argued later that such considerations affect DPRK relations with the great powers.

The USA and Japan

Several developments in the late 1980s may have improved the DPRK's security environment. In particular, improved superpower relations allowed the USA to decrease military spending, and provided for greater fluidity in the DPRK's relations with the USA and Japan.³⁷ The DPRK must open up to the capitalist world to strengthen its weak economy. This partly explains the DPRK law allowing limited joint economic ventures with non-Communist states.³⁸ However, the DPRK remains cautious about such contacts encouraging the acceptance of a two-Korea concept.³⁹ In this respect, the USA has stipulated that US-DPRK relations must be preceded by tension-reducing measures in Korea, and must create an atmosphere conducive to reunification.⁴⁰

It is worth noting that until the 1960s, the DPRK's only contact with non-Communist states was Japan.⁴¹ Japan's formal recognition of the ROK as the sole legitimate Korean

³⁶ Park Han S., "Juche as a Foreign Policy Constraint in North Korea", in Park Jae Kyu, Koh Byung Chul and Kwak Tae-Hwan(eds.), *The Foreign Relations of North Korea: New Perspectives* (hereafter *Foreign Relations of North Korea*) (Seoul: Kyungnam University Press, 1987), pp.59-80.

³⁷ Norman D. Levin, "Global Detente and North Korea's Strategic Relations", in *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Summer 1990, Vol.II, No.2, pp.45-8.

³⁸ Joseph S. Chung, "North Korea's Economic Development and Capabilities", in *Foreign Relations of North Korea*, pp.107-35.

³⁹ Clough, *Embattled Korea*, ch.12.

⁴⁰ "YONHAP Covers U.S. Remarks on Regional Role", in *FBIS-EAS-90-211*, 31 Oct 1990.

⁴¹ Bruce Cumings, "North Korea: Security in the Circle of Great-Power Confrontation", in *The Great-Power Triangle and Asian Security*, pp.162-3.

government in 1965 did not include recognition of the ROK's jurisdiction over the DPRK.⁴² The absence of formal DPRK-Japan relations has not prevented the consolidation of cultural and economic links between the two states;⁴³ by the end of 1989, there were 98 joint economic ventures between the DPRK and Japan.⁴⁴

However, since June 1990, several factors have facilitated attempts by both states to formalize their relations.⁴⁵ These include: the Roh-Gorbachev San Francisco meeting; Japan's subsequent perception of being upstaged by the ROK in its relations with Communist states; and the DPRK's need for foreign investment and technology. The on-going DPRK-ROK talks may provide Japan with greater flexibility in pursuing its relations with the DPRK.

DPRK-Japanese relations have been further encouraged by several other developments. Recently, two Japanese, imprisoned by DPRK authorities for 7 years for alleged acts of espionage against the DPRK, were released.⁴⁶ The PRC has encouraged further DPRK-Japan talks.⁴⁷ Japan and the DPRK held full-dress normalization talks on 30

⁴² Clough, *Embattled Korea*, pp.352-63.

⁴³ Shin Jung Hyun, "North Korea's Policy Toward Japan: Perceptions, Goals, Trends", in *Foreign Relations of North Korea*, pp.276-93.

⁴⁴ "North Korean-Japanese Joint Ventures Detailed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-193*, 4 Oct 1990.

⁴⁵ Kim Hong Nack, "The Normalization of North Korean-Japanese Relations" Problems and Prospects", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Winter 1990, Vol.XIV, No.4, pp.655-8.

⁴⁶ "DPRK Releases Seamen After 7-Year Detention", in *FBIS-EAS-90-197*, 11 Oct 1990. Also see "Two seamen return from North Korea", in *The Japan Times*, 14 Oct 1990.

⁴⁷ "Japan Passes Note to DPRK Via Jiang Zemin", in *FBIS-CHI-90-114*, 14 June 1990. This is but one example. Also see Zhu Ronggen, "Breakthrough in DPRK-Japan Relations", in *Beijing Review* (hereafter *BR*), 22-28 Oct 1990, Vol.33, No.43, pp.9-10. The PRC has long been the conduit for communications between Japan and the DPRK.

January 1991; both agreed to continue discussions on the Yongbyon nuclear plant and the Safeguards Agreement.⁴⁸ Despite the lack of agreement, these talks were seen as amicable; because this was the first round of official talks, no real progress was expected.⁴⁹ A second round of talks in Tokyo was also agreed on. The DPRK delegate, Vice Premier Kim Young-nam, noted that there were no real differences between the positions of the two states.⁵⁰ The DPRK also expressed interest in the idea of transforming the Sea of Japan into a "sea of prosperity".⁵¹

However, problems in the DPRK-Japan relationship exist. The DPRK has criticized Japan's continued support for the USFK,⁵² which the DPRK still seeks to remove.⁵³ Currently, the main contentious issues revolve around war reparations, trade, representation, and the DPRK's signature of the Safeguards Agreement. Further obstacles to normal DPRK-Japan relations arise from the lack of consensus within the ruling Japanese Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) of the issue of reparations, and differences between Japan and the

⁴⁸ "Japan-North Korea talks end with agreement to meet in Pyongyang", in *SWB/FE/0950*, 18 Dec 1990. Also see "Text of Preliminary Talks Agreement with Japan", in *FBIS-EAS-90-243*, 18 Dec 1990; and "Date set for North Korean-Japan talks on normalising relations", in *SWB/FE/0969*, 14 Jan 1991.

⁴⁹ "North Korean Delegate on Final Day of Normalization Talks with Japan", in *SWB/FE/0985*, 1 Feb 1991.

⁵⁰ "North Korean Vice-Premier Comments on Japan-DPRK Normalization Talks", in *SWB/FE/0986*, 2 Feb 1991.

⁵¹ Clayton Jones, "East-West Thaw a Boon for Nations on the Sea of Japan", in *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 Sept 1990.

⁵² "Japan's Support of US Troop Presence Viewed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-180*, 17 Sept 1990.

⁵³ Ralph N. Clough, "North Korea and the US", in *Foreign Relations of North Korea*, pp.255-73.

DPRK over the amount of reparations.⁵⁴

As such, it may be premature to expect full diplomatic relations between the DPRK and Japan. The problems discussed above still await resolution.⁵⁵ While Japan welcomes a stable and secure DPRK, Japan's economic viability and political stability also depend very much on the stability and economic viability of such states as the ROK.⁵⁶ At the same time, the ROK remains vital to the defense of Japan.⁵⁷

The USSR and the PRC

The DPRK's ideal world appears to be the bipolar Cold War era.⁵⁸ The DPRK seems to perceive its security environment through the prism of ideology, historical experience, and personality dispositions of its key actors in policy formulation, particularly Kim Il Sung.⁵⁹

The improved superpower relationship since the late 1980s and the Soviet and Chinese

⁵⁴ Kim Hong Nack, *op.cit.*, pp.688-70. In particular, to the DPRK, the issue of war reparations remains "the most important issue in liquidating the past between DPRK and Japan." See "North Korean Delegation Head on Compensation Issue in Talks with Japan", in *SWB/FE/0985*, 1 Feb 1991.

⁵⁵ "'Many difficult items' on agenda for North Korea-Japan talks", in *SWB/FE/0951*, 19 Dec 1990. Japan's position is that it is not legally bound to pay for war damages. However, Japan recently said that while it is not responsible for reparations cause by hostile relations, it is willing to fulfil obligations relating to the colonial era. See "Tokyo envoy woos Pyongyang", in *The Australian*, 1 Feb 1991.

⁵⁶ Masashi Nishihara, "Japan: Regional Stability", in *Security Interdependence in the Asia Pacific Region*, pp.65-91.

⁵⁷ Edward A. Olsen, "U.S.-Japan Security Relations after Nakasone: The Case for a Strategic Fairness Doctrine", in Ted Galen Carpenter(ed.), *Collective Defense or Strategic Independence? Alternative Strategies for the Future* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1989), p.77.

⁵⁸ Cumings, *op.cit.*, pp.153-9.

⁵⁹ Koh Byung Chul, "North Korean Foreign Policy-Making Process", in *Foreign Relations of North Korea*, pp.39-55.

preoccupation with economic reform and rejuvenation have had a negative impact on the DPRK's interests.⁶⁰ Both the USSR and the PRC now have increasing stakes in peace and stability in Korea and in friendly relations with the ROK; this has diminished the DPRK's leverage over these two states. In fact, improved ROK-USSR and ROK-PRC relations have increased pressure on the DPRK to initiate political and economic reform⁶¹, something it has been loathe to do.⁶²

The normalization of Soviet-ROK relations does not alleviate this problem for the DPRK. Roh Tae Woo's recent USSR visit was thus seen as a particular setback for the DPRK.⁶³ Unfortunately for the DPRK, there appears to be little in the 1961 USSR-DPRK security treaty that precludes formal ROK-USSR relations. (See Appendix 1) This development appears to be a USSR attempt to press the DPRK into following the Soviet policy line.⁶⁴ The USSR has apparently been reticent to supply the DPRK with weapons that could tilt the Korean military balance towards the DPRK.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Levin, *op.cit.*, p.39. Also see Leif Rosenberger and Marian Leighton, "Gorbachev's New Strategic Designs for Asia", in *Security, Strategy and Policy Responses*, p.66.

⁶¹ Lee Hy-sang, "North Korea's Closed Economy: The Hidden Opening", in *Asian Survey*, Dec 1988, Vol.XXVII, No.12, pp.1264-79.

⁶² Segal, *The Soviet Union and the Pacific*, pp.57-9.

⁶³ "South Korean Makes 1st Soviet Visit", in *The Washington Post*, 14 Dec 1990. This visit coincides with the ROK strategy of isolating the DPRK, thus reducing the threat the DPRK would pose to the ROK. Also see James Cotton, "Pyongyang Cast Adrift", in *The Pacific Review*, Vol.3, No.3, 1990, p.275. The DPRK reacted to the establishment of Soviet-ROK ties by reminding the USSR that official recognition of the ROK contravenes the 1961 USSR-DPRK security treaty.

⁶⁴ Kim Ilpyong J., "Policies Toward China and the Soviet Union", in *The Foreign Policy of the Republic of Korea*, pp.204-5.

⁶⁵ Peter Polomka, "Security Issues on the Korean Peninsula", in *Security and arms control*, p.115.

What may be a further problem for the DPRK must be the new Soviet willingness to abandon previously important allies.⁶⁶ In this context, the strategic relevance of the DPRK to the USSR must now be considered. Gerald Segal has argued that with a common border that extends some 20 km, the DPRK is not a "strategic glacis" for the USSR.⁶⁷ However, other factors must be considered. The DPRK appears to be an important link in the Soviet collective security proposal for the Asia-Pacific region.⁶⁸ Access to ports in the DPRK for Soviet naval vessels, particularly Najin, enhances Soviet access to the Pacific Ocean. The DPRK also acts as a buffer zone for Vladivostok.⁶⁹ The DPRK also provides the USSR with an air corridor into Southeast Asia.⁷⁰

Precisely because of its international isolation, the DPRK's economic and military dependence on the USSR may increase.⁷¹ DPRK-USSR trade in the late 1980s amounted

⁶⁶ Mark N. Katz, *Gorbachev's Military Policy in the Third World* The Washington Papers 140 (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1989). Also see Graziani, *op.cit.*, ch.1. Both authors argue that the USSR is now more willing to jettison former allies that are both economic burdens and political liabilities. The DPRK would come under such a classification.

⁶⁷ Segal, *Rethinking the Pacific*, p.220.

⁶⁸ Joseph M. Ha and Linda Beth Jensen, "Soviet policy Toward North Korea", in *The Foreign Relations of North Korea*, pp.155-7.

⁶⁹ Stephen Kirby, *The Two Koreas - Conflict or Compromise?* The Washington Papers 207 (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1988). Also see Milivojevic. *op.cit.*, p.261. The Soviet navy appears to have access to the DPRK ports of Najin, Wonsan and Nampo. The DPRK also has overflight rights through DPRK airspace, and its bases in the DPRK are directly across the PRC's most heavily industrialised areas. See A. James Gregor, "The People's Republic of China and U.S. Security Policy in East Asia", in *Collective Defense*, p.109.

⁷⁰ Kihl Young Whan, "Korean Peninsula", pp.142-6.

⁷¹ *Asian Security 1989-90* (Tokyo: Research Institute for Peace and Security, 1989), pp.145-7.

to 40% of the DPRK's total trade turnover.⁷² Between 1984 and 1988, DPRK-USSR trade grew from US\$400 million to US\$890 million.⁷³ This may increase Soviet leverage over DPRK policy.⁷⁴ The DPRK has come to rely more on the USSR than on PRC for military and economic aid. By 1986, DPRK-USSR trade had doubled that of DPRK-PRC trade.⁷⁵

That does not mean that the DPRK has ceased to rely on the PRC.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the PRC appears to have acquired a stake in peace and stability in Korea. Renewed Korean hostilities could stimulate Japanese rearmament, and increase the USSR's influence over the DPRK.⁷⁷ Several other problems also continue to plague DPRK-PRC relations: differing perceptions of the role of the USFK, Korean reunification, the personality cult in the DPRK, and economic policies.

That does not mean that DPRK-PRC relations are bad *per se*. The DPRK-PRC alliance treaty remains intact until both parties agree to its termination. (See Appendix 2) DPRK-PRC relations have recently improved. The DPRK supported the PRC government's handling of the Tienanmen Square incident of June 1989.⁷⁸ Kim Il Sung visited the PRC

⁷² Segal, *The Soviet Union and the Pacific*, pp.156-9.

⁷³ "DPRK's Economic, Trade Difficulties Reported", in *FBIS-EAS-90-242*, 17 Dec 1990.

⁷⁴ Herbert J. Ellison, *The Soviet Union and northeast Asia* (Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 1989), pp.45-6.

⁷⁵ Segal, *Rethinking the Pacific*, pp.33-40.

⁷⁶ Hwang Byon-moo, "The Evolution of U.S.-China Security Relations and Its Implications for the Korean Peninsula", in *Asian Perspective*, Spring-Summer 1990, Vol.14, No.1, pp.69-90. In the late 1980s, despite relying on trade and investment from the western capitalist countries, the PRC continued arms sales and transfers to the DPRK.

⁷⁷ Chung Chin-wee, "North Korea's Relations with China", in *The Foreign Relations of North Korea*, pp.183-97.

⁷⁸ "DPRK Official Supports PRC on June Riot", in *FBIS-CHI-89-184*, 25 Sept 1989.

in 1990 in an apparent attempt to counteract Soviet-ROK rapprochement⁷⁹; it reflected the DPRK's perceived need to consolidate DPRK-PRC relations.⁸⁰ In October 1991, Kim Il Sung paid another visit to the PRC.⁸¹ Kim's 1990 visit followed a visit by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) General Secretary Jiang Zemin to the DPRK⁸², which resulted in a flurry of exchanges between officials of both states, particularly between KPA and People's Liberation Army (PLA) officials.⁸³

THE ROK AND THE GREAT POWERS

The role of the ROK armed forces (ROKAF) in the ROK policy process cannot be overstated. The ROKAF is one of the main background forces of the ROK government.⁸⁴ Thus it has great influence over ROK foreign and security policy.⁸⁵ As such, ROK policy towards the DPRK reflects the ROKAF concern about isolating the DPRK internationally, so as to reduce the DPRK threat to the ROK. This in turn influences ROK relations with the

⁷⁹ See "Kim Il-sung's 'Secret' Visit to PRC Reported", in *FBIS-EAS-90-177*, 12 Sept 1990; and "Editorial of Kim's Intentions", in *FBIS-EAS-90-179*, 14 Sept 1990.

⁸⁰ "DRPK Official Views Visit", in *FBIS-CHI-90-052*, 16 Mar 1990.

⁸¹ See "North Korea's Kim begins visit to China", in *ST*, 4 Oct 1991; and "China gives high-level welcome to Kim", in *ST*, 5 Oct 1991. Although the leaders of both states reaffirmed their friendship, the DPRK failed to gain economic aid from the PRC. See "Kyodo reports Kim Il-sung did not get economic aid from PRC", in *SWB/FE/1203*, 15 Oct 1991.

⁸² "LIAOWANG Reviews Jaing's North Korea Visit", in *FBIS-CHI-90-054*, 20 Mar 1990. A statement of DPRK-PRC solidarity was issued at the close of Jiang's visit.

⁸³ DPRK's O Chin-u Calls on Jiang Zemin", in *FBIS-CHI-90-058*, 26 Mar 1990; and "PLA Delegation Leaves for DPRK Visit", in *FBIS-CHI-90-075*, 18 April 1990.

⁸⁴ Thomas W. Robinson, "Korea 2000: The Political Component", in *Korea*, pp.69-71.

⁸⁵ William H. Gleysteen Jr., "Korea's Foreign Policy in the Year 2000", in *Korea*, p.45.

great powers.

The USA and Japan

US security concerns in Northeast Asia revolve around Japan and the ROK.⁸⁶ In particular, US policy was predicated on the perceived need to contain the USSR.⁸⁷ A three-way alliance between the USA, Japan and the ROK was also once mooted.⁸⁸ How relevant are these perceptions now?

During the Cold War, it was necessary for the USA to protect the approaches to key states such as Japan; consequently, the defense of the ROK was important.⁸⁹ Japan and the ROK were significant in preventing Soviet egress from the Sea of Japan.⁹⁰ Before the ROK National Assembly in 1989, President Bush reaffirmed the importance of the USA-ROK economic and strategic partnership to US interests.⁹¹

Nonetheless, it seems clear that the USA-ROK relationship has changed. The ROK's increasing self-confidence, due partly to its growing economic power, has allowed the ROK to seek ties with the PRC and other states independently.⁹² The ROK's growing military

⁸⁶ Richard K. Betts, "The United States: Global Deterrence", in *Security Interdependence in the Asia Pacific Region*, pp.29-63.

⁸⁷ Han Sung-joo, "Policy Towards the US", in *The Foreign Policy of the Republic of Korea*, pp.140-1.

⁸⁸ "Korea's Military Alliance with U.S.-Japan Envisaged for the 1990s", in *The Korea Herald*, 24 Sept 1989.

⁸⁹ Eugene V. Rostow, "A Breakfast for Bonaparte: There Is No alternative Strategy", in *Collective Defense*, p.8.

⁹⁰ Gregor, *op.cit.*, pp.111-4.

⁹¹ "Remarks by U.S. President George Bush, Delivered before the Republic of Korea National Assembly, Seoul, February 27, 1989", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Spring 1989, Vol.13, No.1, pp.211-4.

⁹² Han Sung-joo, *op.cit.*, pp.162-4.

power has also helped in this respect.⁹³ At the same time, the improving superpower relationship has diminished the ROK's importance as a front-line state to the USA. USFK reductions and redeployment reflects the changes in the security environment and in the USA-ROK relations.⁹⁴

This process of change has to contend with several other factors. In particular, many ROK citizens still appear to see the USFK as vital to the security of the ROK and the region in general.⁹⁵ The ROKAF still depends on the USA in terms of force structure and formation, operational doctrines, and arms and equipment sales.⁹⁶ This is despite ROK efforts to develop other internal and external sources of strength in countering the perceived military threat from the DPRK.⁹⁷

ROK-Japan relations have been described as good, despite Japan's relations with the DPRK.⁹⁸ Japan remains important to the ROK's economic development. The ROK has

⁹³ Lee Hong Yung, "South Korea: Bipolarity, Multipolarity and the Northern Threat", in *The Great-Power Triangle and Asian Security*, pp.131-51. In 1975, ROK President Park Chung Hee declared that the ROK would "do anything necessary to insure its survival, including the development of nuclear weapons - if the US's nuclear umbrella is withdrawn."

⁹⁴ Kihl Young Whan, "Re-examining the United States Security Role in Korea", pp.44-52. Also see "US troops withdraw from N.Korean border", in *ST*, 3 Oct 1991; and "US 'to remove all N-weapons from S.Korea'", in *ST*, 20 Oct 1991.

⁹⁵ "Article Analyzes Impact of U.S. Force Reductions", in *FBIS-EAS-90-130*, 6 July 1990.

⁹⁶ Kim Sang Joon, *op.cit.*, p.388.

⁹⁷ Lho Kyongsoo, "Prospects for Confidence-Building and Arms Control Measures in the Korean Peninsula", in *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Summer 1990, Vol.XXI, No.2, p.189. For instance, the ROK is becoming increasingly self-sufficient in weapons production.

⁹⁸ Hahn Bae Ho, "Policy Toward Japan", in *The Foreign Policy of the Republic of Korea*, pp.176-99.

also played down efforts by Japanese politicians to improve DPRK-Japan relations. The ROK Foreign Minister said in August 1990 that recent DPRK-Japan contacts remained insignificant because they were non-governmental talks.⁹⁹ ROK officials also stated that they welcomed such efforts by Japan to improve its relations with the DPRK.¹⁰⁰ In December 1990, ROK and Japanese defense ministers urged closer defense cooperation between the two armed forces.¹⁰¹

However, ROK-Japan relations have suffered in the wake of badly-timed developments in the DPRK-Japan relationship. For instance, Japan announced its intention to open contacts with the DPRK just as the ROK itself was about to open its borders to the DPRK.¹⁰² The ROK's *Nordpolitik* strategy of isolating the DPRK internationally was to induce the DPRK to open its borders to the ROK. The prospect of DPRK-Japan contacts thus sabotaged such ROK strategies. A further problem arose with Shin Kanemaru's visit to the DPRK, and his offer to help establish formal DPRK-Japan relations.¹⁰³

The USSR and the PRC

⁹⁹ "Choe Ho-chung Views Japan-DPRK Relations", in *FBIS-EAS-90-148*, 1 Aug 1990.

¹⁰⁰ "Japan's Efforts to Improve DPRK Ties Viewed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-137*, 17 July 1990. The contradiction between such statements and the ROK's apparent policy of isolating the DPRK internationally appears to indicate that such statements by ROK officials were more for rhetorical purposes.

¹⁰¹ "Defense Chiefs Stress Cooperation", in *FBIS-EAS-90-236*, 7 Dec 1990. Also see "Premier Urges Closer Defense Ties With Japan", in *FBIS-EAS-90-237*, 10 Dec 1990.

¹⁰² "Kaifu welcomes DPRK invitation for LDP visit", in *SWB/FE/0827*, 26 July 1990. Also see "Japanese government and parties to discuss improved ties with North Korea", in *SWB/FE/0828*, 28 July 1990.

¹⁰³ "Way called clear for official talks with Pyongyang", in *The Japan Times*, 3 Oct 1990. Shin Kanemaru was one of the top backers of the former Japanese Prime Minister, Toshiki Kaifu.

The Soviet military buildup in the Far East in the early 1980s was seen by the ROK as having a potentially negative impact on the ROK's security.¹⁰⁴ However, the perception of Soviet or Chinese threats to ROK security interests may be unfounded. As already stated, both states share interests in economic investment and trade from the ROK. At the same time, both great powers acknowledge several preconditions for a USFK withdrawal or reduction.¹⁰⁵ In particular, stable inter-Korean relations and greater ROK confidence in its relationship with the USSR have to be realized first.

The Soviet stand on relations with the ROK has evolved, from the non-recognition of the ROK in 1988¹⁰⁶, to conditional recognition of the ROK¹⁰⁷, to the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two states. Roh's December 1990 USSE visit after the establishment of full diplomatic relations was the first official visit by an ROK Head of State to Moscow.¹⁰⁸ In 1991, the ROK extended an offer of US\$3 billion in soft loans and credit guarantees to the USSR.¹⁰⁹ ROK-USSR trade is expected to reach US\$10 billion by 1995.¹¹⁰ At the same time, the ROK has come to depend on the USSR for key

¹⁰⁴ Ha Young-sa, "The Soviet Military Build-up in the Far East: Implications for the Security of South Korea", in *The Soviet Far East Military Build-up*, pp.141-54.

¹⁰⁵ Ellison, *op.cit.*, pp.47-8.

¹⁰⁶ "Excerpts from a Joint Communique on the Visit to North Korea by Soviet Foreign Minister E.A. Shevardnadze, Pyongyang, December 24, 1988", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Spring 1989, Vol.13, No.1, pp.177-9.

¹⁰⁷ "Shev: nuke-free S.K. may mean formal ties with Moscow", in *The Korea Herald*, 22 Nov 1989. The condition was that the ROK accepts the DPRK's NWFZ proposal.

¹⁰⁸ "No Tae-u returns to Seoul from Moscow", in *SWB/FE/0950*, 18 Dec 1990. Roh declared that the visit had "opened a new history and an era of peace and unification on the Korean peninsula."

¹⁰⁹ "Making Friends in the Kremlin", in *Asiaweek*, 4 Jan 1991.

¹¹⁰ "Trade With East Bloc To Grow 70 Percent in 1991", in *5FBIS-EAS-90-206*, 24 Oct 1990.

technologies that it cannot acquire from the USA, Japan or Western Europe.¹¹¹

All this indicates several features about Soviet thinking on the ROK. In particular, the USSR no longer appears to be committed to the defense of the DPRK.¹¹² The downturn in DPRK-USSR relations appears to be motivated partly by the Soviet perception that the DPRK does not constitute a genuine people's republic; it also reflects the improved security environment of Northeast Asia.¹¹³

These efforts at developing ROK-USSR relations correspond with the ROK's *Nordpolitik* strategy. At the same time, the improved ROK-USSR relationship may lead to a reduction in Soviet military aid to the DPRK.¹¹⁴ This has already happened, although it is unclear if this development was motivated by the ROK-USSR relationship. However, despite these advancements, the USSR remains cautious about any sense of euphoria over the establishment of ROK-USSR relations.¹¹⁵

As for ROK-PRC relations, it has been suggested that the PRC has unofficially recognized the ROK since 1972.¹¹⁶ Since then, ROK-PRC trade relations have developed

¹¹¹ "ROK, USSR Agree to Exchange Technologies", in *FBIS-EAS-90-168*, 29 Aug 1990.

¹¹² Ahn Byung-Joon, "South Korean-Soviet Relations: Issues and Prospects", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Winter 1990, Vol.XIV, No.4, pp.671-86.

¹¹³ Constantine V. Pleshakov, "Republic of Korea-USSR Relations: Psychological Choices and Political Challenges", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Winter 1990, Vol.XIV, No.4, pp.786-804.

¹¹⁴ "USSR Ties, Inter-Korean Issues Viewed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-189*, 28 Sept 1990.

¹¹⁵ "Soviet Official on Developing Seoul-Moscow Ties", in *FBIS-EAS-90-246*, 21 Dec 1990. The Soviets argued that the projected benefits from this relationship will take some time before they can be realized.

¹¹⁶ Kim Ilpyong J., *op.cit.*, pp.209-11.

steadily. In 1989, two-way trade between these states exceeded US\$3 billion.¹¹⁷ From January to June 1990, over 600 PRC trade missions were sent to the ROK, a 100% increase from the 1989 numbers.¹¹⁸ Trade offices with consular functions between the ROK and the PRC have been established, contradicting earlier PRC claims that no consular relations between the two states would be established.¹¹⁹

Nonetheless, the PRC still refuses to grant the ROK full diplomatic recognition. According to a PRC spokesman, this is due to the PRC's long-standing relations with its "only socialist ally", namely the DPRK.¹²⁰ The PRC was the first state to criticize the Roh-Gorbachev summit in Moscow.¹²¹

THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN KOREA

Inter-Korean Dialogue

Before the 1970s, inter-Korean dialogue had been very limited; this aspect of inter-Korean relations has since developed further. For example, in the 1980s, the DPRK called

¹¹⁷ "ROK President No's Bid To Improve Ties Viewed", in *FBIS-CHI-90-111*, 8 June 1990.

¹¹⁸ "Trade Expansion Continues with South Korea", in *FBIS-CHI-90-170*, 5 Sept 1990.

¹¹⁹ "Possible Links With South Korea Denied", in *FBIS-CHI-90-082*, 27 April 1990.

¹²⁰ "Official Rules Out Diplomatic Ties With ROK", in *FBIS-CHI-90-035*, 21 Jan 1990. While both superpowers have actively sought relations with both Koreas, the PRC has adopted a "wait and see" attitude towards the issue of ROK-PRC relations. See "'Cross Contacts' on Korean Peninsula Viewed", in *FBIS-CHI-90-107*, 4 June 1990.

¹²¹ "Yang Shangkun Comments on Cambodia, DPRK", in *FBIS-CHI-90-113*, 12 June 1990. The PRC warned the USSR against cooperating with the ROK in isolating the DPRK internationally. See "DPRK, Cambodian Issues in Sino-Soviet Talks", in *FBIS-CHI-90-117*, 18 June 1990.

for tripartite talks between the two Koreas and the USA.¹²² The reasons for such calls is unclear. However, to the ROK, the DPRK was motivated by three factors: dialogue as a way to facilitate the USFK withdrawal; as a stimulus to dissent in the ROK; and as a means of helping the DPRK to surmount its economic problems.¹²³

What such perceptions indicate is a lack of trust in the DPRK, despite the ROK claim that DPRK-ROK dialogue since 1984 has reaped real benefits for the ROK, and that they have helped to achieve reunification.¹²⁴ Further evidence of the continuing ROK distrust in the DPRK can be seen in the recent arrest of 31 ROK students for allegedly forming a DPRK-sponsored organization seeking to overthrow the ROK government.¹²⁵

The Balance of Power in Korea

Any analysis of the Korean balance of power cannot ignore the issue of US forces in Northeast Asia, which remains a significant military power in the region.¹²⁶ The USFK consists of the 2nd Infantry Division, along with 72 F-16 aircraft, under the aegis of the United Nations Command (UNC). The USFJ, with 72 F-15C/D, 48 F-16 aircraft and basing facilities for one carrier battle group, can project significant power into the Korean peninsula. The deployment of 3 E-3 airborne warning and control systems (AWACS) gives the USA a significant early warning facility in the event of another Korean war. These UNC forces

¹²² Fuji Kamiya, "Prospects for a New Korean War: Implications for Security in Northeast Asia", in *The Soviet Far East Military Build-up*, pp.173-85.

¹²³ *A White Paper on South-North Dialogue in Korea* (hereafter *White Paper*) (Seoul: National Unification Board, 1988), pp.30-4.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.185.

¹²⁵ "Seoul claims students form subversive unit", in *The Washington Times*, 27 Dec 1990.

¹²⁶ *The Military Balance 1990-91*, p.26.

are under the command of the Commander in Chief of the UNC, concurrently the Commander of the USFK.¹²⁷

The Korean balance of power is characterized as tense but stable.¹²⁸ The absence of another Korean war since the Armistice can be attributed partly to the fact that neither superpower wants a resumption of violence. However, that has not prevented both Koreas from engaging in verbal war against each other.¹²⁹

The Korean military balance may still favour the DPRK (See Table 1), although this situation should change in a few years.¹³⁰ In any case, the DPRK may only have a numerical advantage over the ROK presently.¹³¹ The ROKAF's better training and equipment, its access to US military intelligence, and its superior military infrastructure may negate any numerical advantage the DPRK may enjoy.¹³² In any case, the USFK could be

¹²⁷ "United Nations Command and Combined Forces Command in Korea", in *Handbook*.

¹²⁸ Segal, *Rethinking the Pacific*, pp.206-7.

¹²⁹ For instance, in Kim Il Sung's 1991 New Year message, he accused the ROK and the USA of not showing any interest in measures that would enhance the peace and stability of Korea. See "Kim Il-Sung's New Year Speech: Domestic Policy and Relations with South Korea", in *SWB/FE/0960*, 3 Jan 1991. Also see "South's Refusal of Nonaggression Pact Viewed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-242*, 17 Dec 1990, for a critique of the ROK stand on the DPRK nonaggression proposal.

¹³⁰ Oh Kwan-chi, "The Military Balance on the Korean Peninsula", in *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Summer 1990, Vol.II, No.1, pp.95-109.

¹³¹ It has been alleged that a large number of the DPRK's 1 million men under military service are deployed in civilian construction roles, and have, as such, no real military significance. See "DPRK Military Leadership, Tactics Examined", in *FBIS-EAS-91-005*, 8 Jan 1991.

¹³² Stephen Goose, "The Military Situation on the Korean Peninsula", in John Sullivan and Roberta Foss(eds.), *Two Koreas - One Future?* Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 1987), pp.55-85. Also see Kihl Young Whan, "Korean Peninsula", p.141; and Kirby, *op.cit.*, pp.15-17. The advantage that good training has over mere numbers was well demonstrated by the recent war in Kuwait.

TABLE 1

BALANCE OF MILITARY POWER, 1981-1990

	1985-1986		1986-1987		1987-1988	
DESCRIPTION	DPRK	ROK	DPRK	ROK	DPRK	ROK
ARMY: ACTIVE/RESERVE('000)	750/500	520/1400	750/500	520/1400	750/500	542/1400
ARMOUR	3425	1200	3275	1300	2900	1300
NAVY: MAJOR COMBATANTS	54	36	59	31	63	38
AMPHIBIOUS	120	32	128	27	135	46
AIR FORCE: COMBAT AIRCRAFT	800	451	854	462	840	476
TRANSPORT	272	34	272	34	242	34
	1988-1989		1989-1990		1990-1991	
DESCRIPTION	DPRK	ROK	DPRK	ROK	DPRK	ROK
ARMY: ACTIVE/RESERVE('000)	750/500	542/ -	930/500	550/ -	1000/500	650/ -
ARMOUR	3000	1500	3550	1560	4150	1550
NAVY: MAJOR COMBATANTS	57	43	58	42	54	52
AMPHIBIOUS	126	52	126	52	126	52
AIR FORCE: COMBAT AIRCRAFT	800	473	650	447	716	469
TRANSPORT	272	39	280	37	280	33

Source: *The Military Balance* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies), 1985-86 to 1990-91 editions.

involved in a DPRK invasion of the ROK¹³³, although a nuclear response is never automatic.¹³⁴

The possibility of a USFK nuclear response to a DPRK invasion of the ROK has been a particularly vexing point for the DPRK. The DPRK has demanded a legal guarantee from the USA against a US nuclear attack on the former before it will sign the Safeguards Agreement.¹³⁵ The DPRK has also demanded simultaneous inspection of nuclear facilities in both Koreas.¹³⁶ It now seems clear that the USA will withdraw all its nuclear weapons from the ROK¹³⁷, but the DPRK has not indicated that it will sign the Safeguards Agreement.

The fact remains that the ROK's annual military budget has outstripped the DPRK's for the last decade. (See Table 2) The ROK's military budget has also been consistently less as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) than the DPRK's. A comparison of the

¹³³ Bae Myong-oh, "Prospects of Inter-Korean Military Relations", in *Korea Observer*, Spring 1989, Vol. XX, No. 1, pp. 25-6.

¹³⁴ Kim Seung-hwan, "Prospects for Korean Security", in Stephen P. Gibert (ed.), *Security in Northeast Asia: Approaching the Pacific Century* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1988), p. 91. Article 3 of the USA-ROK security treaty, and the War Powers Act, stipulates that the US government has to seek Congressional approval before the USFK can be deployed against invading KPA forces. See Edward A. Olsen, "How Pyongyang Might Think It Could Win The Next Round In Korea", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Winter 1982, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 598-9.

¹³⁵ "Pyongyang Statement on Nuclear Safeguard Accord", in *FBIS-EAS-90-222*, 16 Nov 1990. Also see "Japan and North Korea 'still far apart' at end of normalization talks", in *SWB/FE/0985*, 1 Feb 1991. Such demands, despite the point that a nuclear response from the USA not being guaranteed in the first place may indicate that the DPRK does not intend to sign the Safeguards Agreement at all.

¹³⁶ "North Wants Inspection of U.S. Nuclear Forces", in *FBIS-EAS-90-223*, 19 Nov 1990.

¹³⁷ See "US 'to remove all N-weapons from S.Korea'", in *ST*, 20 Oct 1991.

TABLE 2

MILITARY EXPENDITURE OF THE TWO KOREAS

	1988 prices(US\$million)		% of GDP	
	DPRK	ROK	DPRK	ROK
1980	1279	4924	10.4	5.1
1981	1400	5103	10.7	5.9
1982	1508	5318	11.5	6.0
1983	1642	5535	11.8	5.8
1984	1776	5675	12.3	5.3
1985	1830	6135	12.0	4.9
1986	1849	6593		4.9
1987	1847	7195		4.7
1988	1797	7865	9.5	4.5
1989	1888	8030	8.7	4.6

Source: Saaget Deger, "World Military Expenditure", in *SIPRI Yearbook 1990: World Armament and Disarmament* (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1990), pp.143-202.

TABLE 3

RECENT WEAPONS ACQUISITION PROGRAMMES

	WEAPONS SYSTEM	No. ORDERED	REMARKS
DPRK	F-6 MiG-21MF MiG-2 MiG-29 Su-25 SA-5 SAM SSN-2 SSM AA-7 AAM AA-8 AAM	100(?) 150(?) 60 25 20(?) 375(?) 112(?) 120(?) 360(?)	
ROK	Type 209/3 submarine Lynx helicopter ST-1802 Sea Skua F-16C/D F-4E F/A-18 AIM-7E AAM AIM-9P AAM BGM-71D TOW	1 12 48(?) 34 48 48 148(?) 500 640(?)	additional 2 additional 20(?) fire control radar total 196(?) additional 72

Source: Ian Anthony and Herbert Wulf, "The Trade in Major Conventional Weapons", in *SIPRI Yearbook 1990: World Armament and Disarmament* (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1990), pp.219-316.

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF STATISTICS BETWEEN THE ROK AND THE DPRK, 1989

	UNIT	ROK	DPRK
Land area	1000 km ²	99.30	122.10
Population	million	42.30	21.30
Workforce	million	17.97	9.27
GNP	US\$ billion	210.00	21.00
GNP growth rate	%	6.70	2.40
Military spending	US\$ billion	9.18	4.49
Foreign trade:	US\$ billion	123.84	4.80
* exports	US\$ billion	61.40	1.94
* imports	US\$ billion	56.80	2.85
Total foreign debt	US\$ billion	29.40	7.87
Electric generation	billion kWh	94.40	29.10
Crude oil imports	million tonne	40.40	2.60
Grain production	million tonne	7.16	5.48

Source: *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 Aug 1991

¹³⁹ For instance, the ROK was planning to purchase F/A-18 Hornet aircraft. See William D. Hartung, "U.S.-Korean M Deal Boosts Arms Trade", in *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, Nov 1990, Vol. 46, No. 9, pp. 18-24. Also see Manfred Bergstein, "South Korea's Aerospace Industry", in *Asian Defence Journal*, Dec 1990, pp. 30-4. This has since then been changed to F-16 aircraft, which the ROK will manufacture under license. See "Deal with US will allow S.Korea to build F-16s", in *ST*, 10 July 1991.

¹⁴⁰ "N.K. registers 3% GNP growth last year, NUP", in *The Korea Herald*, 10 Sept 1989.

¹⁴¹ "Soviet Expert Says DPRK Economy 'Shrank'", in *FBIS-EAS-90-242*, 17 Dec 1990.

¹⁴² "Two Koreas' Economic Indexes Compared", in *FBIS-EAS-90-153*, 8 Aug 1990. Also see Andrew Mack, "Why Pyongyang nuclear programme is causing concern", in *APDR*, Nov 1990, pp. 16-17.

¹⁴³ "Growth of 7.1% seen for Korea in 1991-95", in *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 14 Jan 1991.

latest Korean military balance reveals the ROK's technological edge over the DPRK.¹³⁸ That technological advantage is set to increase, on account of the ROK's latest weapons acquisition programmes.¹³⁹ (See Table 3)

The shifting military balance of power is underscored by the economic balance of power. In 1988, according to some estimates, the DPRK's gross national product (GNP) and per capita GNP stood at US\$20.6 billion and US\$980 respectively; by comparison, the ROK's 1988 GNP and per capita GNP were US\$169.2 billion and US\$4040 respectively.¹⁴⁰ The USSR has said that the DPRK's per capita GNP is US\$400 instead.¹⁴¹ Military expenditure as a percentage of GNP for the DPRK and the ROK stood at 21.5% and 4.6% respectively.¹⁴² The ROK's GNP is expected to increase at an annual rate of about 7.1% for the next five years.¹⁴³ Table 4 provides alternative estimates of the economic and demographic figures of the two Koreas.

In terms of the Korean balance of military power, the DPRK has to continue existing

¹³⁸ See *The Military Balance 1990-91*, pp.166-9.

¹³⁹ For instance, the ROK was planning to purchase F/A-18 Hornet aircraft. See William D. Hartung, "U.S.-Korean Jet Deal Boosts Arms Trade", in *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, Nov 1990, Vol.46, No.9, pp.18-24. Also see Machmud Benjamin, "South Korea's Aerospace Industry", in *Asian Defence Journal*, Dec 1990, pp.80-4. This has since then been changed to F-16 aircraft, which the ROK will manufacture under license. See "Deal with US will allow S.Korea to build F-16s", in *ST*, 10 July 1991.

¹⁴⁰ "N.K. registers 3% GNP growth last year: NUB", in *The Korea Herald*, 10 Sept 1989.

¹⁴¹ "Soviet Expert Says DPRK Economy 'Shrank'", in *FBIS-EAS-90-242*, 17 Dec 1990.

¹⁴² "Two Koreas' Economic Indexes Compared", in *FBIS-EAS-90-153*, 8 Aug 1990. Also see Andrew Mack, "Why Pyongyang nuclear programme is causing concern", in *APDR*, Nov 1990, pp.16-17.

¹⁴³ "Growth of 7.1% seen for Korea in 1991-96", in *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 14 Jan 1991.

levels of defense spending to maintain its numerical superiority over the ROKAF. However, it is unlikely that this situation can be maintained indefinitely.¹⁴⁴ This presents two possible developments. On the one hand, the DPRK could become increasingly preoccupied with internal economic reform.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, the DPRK never renounced its aim of reunifying Korea under its aegis, and nuclear weapons could be a cost-effective way for the DPRK to realize this objective.¹⁴⁶ However, nuclear weapons could backfire, as will be discussed in chapter four.

However, it has to be remembered that the issue of economic power can be overstated. The ROK economy may have been growing at a spectacular rate over the 1980s, but the ROK economy remains vulnerable, precisely because of its dependence on free trade and the state of the world economy.¹⁴⁷ The ROK economy now has to grapple with problems relating to its growing current accounts deficit.¹⁴⁸ The ROK is now faced with slower economic growth and ever-increasing balance of payments deficits.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Kim Seung-hwan, *op.cit.*, pp.87-8.

¹⁴⁵ Shinn Rinn-Sup, *op.cit.*, p.414.

¹⁴⁶ The DPRK could have calculated nuclear weapons could be used to blackmail on the ROK. In other words, in this scenario, the DPRK would present the ROK with two options - accept DPRK control, or face nuclear annihilation.

¹⁴⁷ Lee Min Yong, "The Feasibility of the Arms Control Discussion in the Korean Peninsula", in *Korea Observer*, Spring 1990, Vol.XXI, No.1, pp.107-33. Also see "Reshuffle as Korea grapples with economic imbalances", in *The Australian*, 26 Feb 1991.

¹⁴⁸ See, for instance, "Korea's Payments Gap Narrowed Last Month but Rose in 9 Months", in *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 1-2 Nov 1991; and "Trade Deficit In South Korea Nearly Tripples", in *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 4 Nov 1991.

¹⁴⁹ See "Record Deficit Is Predicted for South Korea", in *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 28 November 1991; and "South Korea's Economy Slows To 8.1% Growth", in *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 29-30 November 1991.

Despite the problems in the ROK economy just discussed, the overall picture that emerges is grim, from the DPRK perspective. The Northeast Asian security environment appears to be shifting inexorably in the ROK's favour, particularly as its economic power and global influence increases. The DPRK's relations with Japan and the USA have been less successful than the ROK's with the USSR and the PRC.

To some extent, the Northeast Asian security environment remains a zero sum game to both Koreas. This arrangement may be inherently unstable, as further losses may induce the DPRK to try to correct the imbalances. However, as this chapter has attempted to demonstrate, the element of instability is counteracted by the fact that none of the great powers would welcome a resumption of conflict in Korea. The next chapter will discuss the impact these fears of the DPRK's nuclear ambitions have had on the security environment, particularly the Korean balance of power.

THE IMPACT OF UNCERTAINTY ON THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT OF NORTHEAST ASIA

CHAPTER THREE

In this chapter, the impact of uncertainty on the security environment of Northeast Asia will be examined. First, however, it should be noted that the Korean peninsula remains one of the most heavily armed regions in the world; over one million troops face each other over the DMZ. The current situation could possibly be a recipe for disaster.

Shai Feldman has argued that a covert nuclear weapons programme tends to be more destabilizing than an overt programme.¹ The transition from a purely conventional military capability to a relatively secure retaliatory nuclear weapons capability is particularly destabilizing. This argument assumes that because no state's covert nuclear weapons programme can be kept absolutely secret, hostile neighbouring states will then be tempted to launch a preemptive strike against the first state's nuclear weapons facilities before it gains those nuclear weapons it seeks.²

A second problem that faces any nuclear-armed state derives from the credibility - or lack thereof - of nuclear deterrence. In a crisis situation, the nuclear-armed state is placed under great pressure to either utilize its nuclear arsenal or suffer a great loss of credibility.³ The nuclear-armed state that fails to use its nuclear weapons, in a crisis that questions the very existence of that state, will demonstrate to the state's adversary a lack of political

¹ Shai Feldman, "Managing Nuclear Proliferation", in *Limiting Nuclear Proliferation*, pp. 304-6.

² Probably the best example of such an incident is the Israeli attack on Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981.

³ Lawrence Freedman, "Nuclear Strategists", in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 742-3.

THE IMPACT OF UNCERTAINTY ON THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT OF NORTHEAST ASIA

In this chapter, the impact of the DPRK's alleged nuclear ambitions on the security environment of Northeast Asia will be examined. From the outset, it should be noted that the Korean peninsula remains one of the most heavily armed regions in the world; over one million troops face each other over the DMZ. The current situation could possibly be a recipe for disaster.

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² Probably the best example of such an incident is the Israeli attack on Iraq's Osiraq nuclear reactor in 1981.

³ Lawrence Freedman, "Nuclear Strategists", in Peter Paret(ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp.742-3.

resolve. Once the nuclear-armed state realizes such pressures, it may launch a nuclear preemptive strike against its adversary in a genuine crisis. Such pressures to launch a nuclear preemptive strike increase manifold if the nuclear arsenal is small and vulnerable itself to destruction in a preemptive strike by that adversary.

Such factors would appear to apply to the Korean case. If anything, the lack of strategic depth in the DPRK would only accentuate this problem, as most of the country is within range of the modern combat aircraft in the ROK air force.⁴ However, elements of stability would probably be in place. In particular, a nuclear strike at the ROK by the DPRK could invite a similar retaliatory strike against the DPRK by the US Navy (USN). It is worth reiterating that a USN nuclear retaliatory strike against a conventional DPRK attack is not assured.

In any case, the argument about horizontal nuclear proliferation being inherently destabilizing requires more rigorous examination. For it to be destabilizing, several preconditions have to be met, of which the most important is that the state that acquires nuclear weapons must also acquire the command, control, communications(C³) and delivery systems to allow these states to utilize these nuclear weapons.⁵

⁴ For instance, the F-16C aircraft flown by the ROK air force has a combat range of 500 nautical miles(about 925 km). See Mark Lambert(ed.), *Jane's All the World's Aircraft 1990-91* (London: Jane's Publishing Co. Ltd., 1990). Even the older F-5E aircraft, also in the ROK air force, has a combat range 570 nautical miles (about 1056 km). See John WR Taylor(ed.), *Jane's All the World's Aircraft 1982-83* (London: Jane's Publishing Co. Ltd., 1982).

⁵ R.N.Rosecrance, "International Stability and Nuclear Diffusion", in R.N. Rosecrance(ed.), *The Dispersion of Nuclear Weapons: Strategy and Politics* (New York and London: Columbia University Press), pp.293-314. Other preconditions include the widespread dissemination of nuclear weapons technology; states must have the political will to acquire and to use these weapons in crisis situations; and the superpowers must not act to counteract the horizontal nuclear proliferation. Of these preconditions, only one - the widespread dissemination of nuclear weapons technology - can be said to exist unambiguously

It has been argued that despite the improved superpower relationship, the prospects of inter-Korean conflict remain as high as ever, by dint of the continuing Korean arms race.⁶ It seems clear that neither superpower would welcome such a development. Indeed, both superpowers have worked to introduce conflict management mechanisms in Korea, to help prevent the resumption of inter-Korean violence.⁷

IMPACT ON THE GREAT POWERS

The USSR and the PRC

A joint USSR-PRC statement issued by their respective foreign ministers in September 1990 expressed a common desire for peace and stability in Korea.⁸ However, both states appear to favour the status quo in Korea; an independent DPRK is thus in their interests.⁹ The PRC had declared that it would establish full diplomatic relations with the ROK once the USSR had done so.¹⁰ But so far, the PRC and the ROK have agreed only to the establishment of trade offices with consular functions in the respective capitals.

A stable security environment is vital to the long-term economic development of the PRC.¹¹ However, this appears to include a strong and stable DPRK. One variable in the

⁶ Paul Beaver, "In the shadows of conflict", in *JDW*, 5 Jan 1991.

⁷ Segal, *The Soviet Union and the Pacific*, p.75.

⁸ "Chinese and Soviet Foreign Ministers Conclude Talks", in *BR*, 17-23 Sept 1990, Vol.33, No.38, pp.8-9.

⁹ Clough, *Embattled Korea*, ch.8.

¹⁰ "Developing Relations With China, USSR Viewed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-180*, 17 Sept 1990.

¹¹ Robert Sutter, "China: Coping with the Evolving Strategic Environment", in *Security, Strategy and Policy Responses*, pp.110-13.

improved DPRK-PRC relationship since the late 1980s has been the shared realization of the need to improve economic conditions in the DPRK.¹²

In this light, it does not appear strange that the PRC supports the DPRK's NWFZ proposal. The PRC also calls for the removal of all foreign-owned nuclear weapons from Korea.¹³ Thus, the PRC's interest in a strong and stable DPRK does not appear to be in a nuclear-armed DPRK.¹⁴ A nuclear-armed DPRK could force the ROK to cross the nuclear threshold as well. Such a situation would surely dictate significant increases in the military budget. Given the close DPRK-PRC relationship, ROK-PRC trade - should it benefit the DPRK - would suffer. Of course, despite the suspicions about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, ROK-PRC trade have yet to suffer.

At the same time, the DPRK remains important to the PRC's security interests *vis-a-vis* the USSR. Despite Sino-Soviet rapprochement, the improved DPRK-PRC relationship, at a time when DPRK-USSR ties are suffering, suggests that the DPRK is still regarded by the PRC as an important balance against the USSR.¹⁵ This interdependent relationship is

¹² "Purpose of Kim Il-song's China Visit Analyzed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-178*, 13 Sept 1990.

¹³ "Qian Qichen Urges U.S., USSR Base Removal", in *FBIS-CHI-90-039*, 27 Feb 1990. Also see "Qian Qichen Remarks at Disarmament Conference", in *FBIS-CHI-90-040*, 28 Feb 1990.

¹⁴ Given the level of trade between the ROK and the PRC, a nuclear-armed DPRK could ultimately work against the PRC's economic interests. ROK-PRC two-way trade for 1990 amounted to US\$3.8 billion. So far, in the first 7 months of 1991, two-way trade has amounted to over US\$3 billion. See "Direct China-Korea links", in *The Nation*, 5 Nov 1991.

¹⁵ At a time of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the USSR, the hard-line DPRK regime allowed the PRC to escape total international isolation after the Tienanmen Square incidents. This friendly relationship between these two countries is evidenced by Kim Il Sung's latest visit to the PRC this year. See "China gives high-level welcome to Kim", in *ST*, 5 Oct 1991.

likely to continue, in light of the recent developments in the USSR.¹⁶

However, the DPRK is also strategically placed, in terms of the USSR's security interests in Northeast Asia. It remains unlikely that a Sino-Soviet bloc - reminiscent of the 1950s - will be forged.¹⁷ The PRC will probably still seek to counter potential threats to its regional security interests. A DPRK amenable to the PRC's regional security interests would be of benefit to the PRC. The fact that the DPRK has sought to improve its relations with the PRC at this time is also significant. It is unlikely that a nuclear-armed DPRK would have much incentive to improve its relations with any state, given its ideological tendencies.

The strategic relevance of the DPRK to the USSR's regional security interests have already been noted. Despite the DPRK's traditional dependence on the USSR for high-technology weapons systems to offset the ROK's growing technological advantage, the USSR never enjoyed much influence over DPRK policy. A nuclear-armed DPRK would be even less amenable to Soviet security interests in the region. The USSR thus has every reason in a non-nuclear DPRK. As with the PRC, the USSR is also dependent on trade and investment from the ROK. For instance, the development of Soviet Siberia is likely to depend on the influx of technology and capital from states like the ROK.¹⁸ A nuclear-armed DPRK is likely to threaten ROK-USSR trade and economic cooperation.¹⁹

Given the existing suspicions about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, it is all the more

¹⁶ This refers to the failed coup attempt against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, and the subsequent renunciation of Communism and dismantling of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union by Gorbachev.

¹⁷ In light of the recent developments in the USSR, this becomes even more unlikely.

¹⁸ This is because the Japanese, the first Asians the USSR approached to help them develop Siberian resources, are not interested in Siberia.

¹⁹ The same arguments in the case of the PRC apply here as well. A nuclear arms race in Korea would demand a great increase in the ROK's military budget.

amazing that ROK-USSR relations have blossomed. It is difficult to establish clear causal links between the two developments, but some tenuous remarks can be made. ROK-USSR ties may indicate Soviet concern about how a nuclear-armed DPRK could threaten its relations with the ROK; or it could mean that the USSR was not involved in the Yongbyon and related nuclear facilities. If so, then the question of how the DPRK could acquire nuclear weapons remains to be answered.

The USA and Japan

US and Japanese security interests in Korea are inter-related. The US commitment to the defense of the ROK is essential to the defense of Japan.²⁰ In other words, US security interests in the ROK are linked to its interests in Japan.

The Northeast Asian security environment is not as volatile as it is often made out to be. Since the mid-1970s, elements within the USA have been arguing that the USFK could be safely withdrawn without endangering US security interests in the region; such calls were predicated on the idea that both the PRC and the USSR always knew that the USA would "meet any North Korean aggression with overwhelming force".²¹ This argument could be read to mean the extension of the US nuclear umbrella over the ROK. Such calls from within the USA for the reduction or withdrawal of the USFK have since then been repeated

²⁰ Edward A. Olsen, "The Evolution of Japan's Security Options", in *Security, Strategy and Policy Responses*, pp.34-5.

²¹ See, for instance, "Statement of Honourable Harold Brown Secretary of Defense Before the House International Relations Committee Concerning the Withdrawal of U.S. Ground Forces from Korea. 22 February 1978", in *Handbook on Korean-U.S. Relations: Centennial Edition* (hereafter *Handbook*) (New York: The Asia Society, 1985), pp.231-4. Also see Ralph N. Clough, *Deterrence and Defense in Korea: The Role of U.S. Forces* Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1976).

often.²²

A recent security problem for Japan is precisely the likelihood of a USFK reduction or withdrawal. A possible solution to such a problem could be the establishment of an ROK-Japan mutual security and defense arrangement. Any war in Korea will inevitably involve Japan in some form or another.²³ A Korean war will inevitably involve Japan one way or another.²⁴ Korea is also a vital link to the security of Japan. However, despite both states recognizing the subsequent need for defense cooperation, serious obstacles to such cooperation nonetheless exist. Anti-Japanese sentiments remain strong in both Koreas, and the PRC has expressed reservation about Japan filling the vacuum left in the event of a US withdrawal from Northeast Asia.²⁵ Advances in the DPRK-Japan relationship have occurred alongside setbacks in the ROK-Japan relationship.²⁶

It should be noted that these attempts by Japan at improving its relations with the DPRK are fairly recent, and have been conducted under the cloud of suspicion about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. Several plausible explanations for this exist. Japan could have calculated that a DPRK re-integrated into the international community would have less

²² See, for instance, Stephen P. Goose, "U.S. Forces in Korea: Assessing a Reduction", in *Collective Defense*, pp.85-102.

²³ Sheldon W. Simon, "Pacific Rim Reactions to US Military Strategy", in *Security, Strategy and Policy Responses*, pp.88-9.

²⁴ Kim Seung-hwan, *op.cit.*, pp.90-1. Also see Stephen P. Gibert, "The Northeast Asian Arena", in Stephen P. Gibert(ed.), *Security in Northeast Asia: Approaching the Pacific Century* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1988), ch.3. Even if Japanese forces are not directly involved in fighting in Korea, US forces will have to operate out of bases in Japan.

²⁵ "Article Views Japan's Foreign Policy", in *FBIS-CHI-90-095*, 16 Mar 1990.

²⁶ "Japan's Developing Relations With North Korea Viewed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-178*, 13 Sept 1990.

motivation to seek an indigenous nuclear capability.²⁷ This may explain Japan's determination to continue negotiations, despite recent setbacks.²⁸ This has already been discussed in the last chapter. At the same time, however, Japan has tried to accommodate the ROK's security concerns in the former's dialogue with the DPRK.²⁹

However, it is possible that Japan does not consider it likely that the DPRK would either have the nuclear ambitions in the first place or that the DPRK would have the prerequisite technological development to manufacture a nuclear weapon. It is also possible that Japan does not see a nuclear-armed DPRK as a necessarily destabilizing development in the Northeast Asian security environment. The point thus remains - despite the cloud of suspicion regarding the DPRK's alleged nuclear ambitions, Japan has not been deterred from seeking better relations with the former.

IMPACT ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

The security environment on the Korean peninsula is shaped by several factors. These include the possible nuclearization of the DPRK, the great power interests in Korea, developments in inter-Korea relations, and the economic development of the ROK.³⁰

²⁷ Japan could have calculated that the DPRK would have less reason to upset international equilibrium if it were re-integrated into the international system; this would give the DPRK a stake in the status quo.

²⁸ "Third Japan-DPRK preliminary talks in Peking in deadlock", in *SWB/FE/0949*, 17 Dec 1990.

²⁹ "No Tae-u and Kaifu Discuss North Korea in First Summit", in *SWB/FE/0967*, 11 Jan 1991. Japan agreed to the ROK's condition for Japan-DPRK relations, that the DPRK first sign the Safeguards Agreement and that the DPRK first open its borders to the ROK.

³⁰ Richard Sim, "Korea's Changing Security Environment", in Michael Leifer(ed.), *The Balance of Power in East Asia* (London: MacMillan, 1986), pp.107-16.

Impact on the DPRK

It should be noted that the DPRK's strategy calls for *juche* in the reunification of Korea.³¹ This would be done by undermining the social and political stability of the ROK, and by reducing the probability of the USA intervening in another Korean war. The existing suspicions about the DPRK's alleged nuclear ambitions has thus been counter-productive. The idea of a USA-Japan-ROK security alliance has already been mooted. At the same time, the USA plans to reduce the USFK by only 10%. To the USA, the DPRK remains a dangerous and reckless state; a precipitous USFK withdrawal would only have dangerous consequences for US security interests in Northeast Asia.³² This highlights a key problem in the DPRK-USA relationship - the Korean balance of military power.

However, it has to be remembered that presently, a nuclear imbalance probably already exists in Korea. This refers to the tactical nuclear weapons that the USFK deploys in the defence of the ROK. It is worth reiterating, however, that a nuclear response by the USFK is never guaranteed; this issue will be addressed later in this chapter.

At the same time, the fact that the DPRK has so far successfully withstood tremendous international pressures on it to sign the Safeguards Agreement may have resulted in increased prestige for the DPRK.³³ The current situation makes the DPRK appear as a country technologically advanced enough to develop and deploy nuclear weapons. The resistance the DPRK has shown to the USA in particular,³⁴ regarding signing the Safeguards

³¹ Baek Jong-chun, *op.cit.*, p.315.

³² Peter Arnold, "Democrats blast plan as cautious", in *The Washington Times*, 20 April 1990.

³³ "Article Assesses North's Nuclear Development", in *FBIS-EAS-90-174*, 7 Sept 1990.

³⁴ The DPRK has stipulated that its endorsement of the Safeguards Agreement must be conditioned by the withdrawal of the USFK. See "DPRK Ambassador Holds News

Agreement, may boost the DPRK's standing within Korean nationalist elements. This would be true, considering the antipathy towards the issue of foreign forces on Korean soil within Korean nationalism.³⁵

The USSR's limited influence over the DPRK, despite the latter's economic and military dependence on the former,³⁶ has already been noted. The USSR would have even less influence over a nuclear-armed DPRK. Given current trends in the Korean military balance, a conventionally-armed DPRK has a better chance on ensuring some degree of Soviet influence over the DPRK. This may have motivated the latest Soviet decision to suspend arms sales and transfers to the DPRK.³⁷

It has been argued by PRC observers that despite long-standing problems, inter-Korean relations are bound to be affected by the prevalent atmosphere in superpower relations.³⁸ However, the sincerity of the DPRK's 1989 proposal to the ROK for high-level political and military talks³⁹ may be questioned. The DPRK may have calculated that the current suspicions about its nuclear ambitions could give it some degree of leverage over the

Conference", in *FBIS-EAS-90-139*, 19 July 1990; and "North Korean Statement on Signing Nuclear Safeguards Agreement", in *SWB/FE/0925*, 19 Nov 1990.

³⁵ Considering this antipathy, the creation of a Korean NWFZ - based on the withdrawal of USFK nuclear forces and the DPRK's subsequent endorsement of the Safeguards Agreement - would be seen by such nationalist elements as the result of the DPRK's efforts. If the DPRK then succeeded in forcing the total withdrawal of the USFK, this would only serve to enhance its standing with Korean nationalist elements.

³⁶ See Sidney Bearman, "Soviet Policy in East Asia", in *The Balance of Power in East Asia*, p.19, for a reiteration of this point.

³⁷ See "Moscow suspends arms supplies to Pyongyang: Report", in *ST*, 31 Oct 1991.

³⁸ "Korean Prime Ministerial Meeting Viewed", in *FBIS-CHI-90-129*, 3 July 1990.

³⁹ "Letter from Yon Hyong-muk, Premier of the Administrative Council of North Korea to Kang Young-hoon, South Korean Prime Minister, 16 Jan 1989", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Spring 1989, Vol.13, No.1, pp.191-3.

ROK in inter-Korean talks. This perception appears to have some validity. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the ROK appears to have made some concessions to the DPRK's demands. In 1989, Kim Il Sung stated that the cancellation of the 1989 USA-ROK 'Team Spirit' military exercise would give fresh impetus to inter-Korean dialogue and Korean reunification.⁴⁰ The ROK did not cancel the 1989 'Team Spirit' exercises, but in 1991, as will be discussed in the next chapter, this exercise was scaled down.

The DPRK-PRC relationship faces several conflicting impulses. On the one hand, ROK-ROK trade has outstripped DPRK-PRC trade. The PRC's greater reliance on the ROK may have forced the PRC to press the DPRK to be less doctrinaire and rigid on the issue of Korean reunification. However, the recently-improved DPRK-PRC relationship, despite the DPRK's alleged nuclear ambitions, appears to indicate a PRC perception that a nuclear-armed DPRK may not have such a disastrous impact on the Northeast Asian security environment as feared by the other actors in the region.

Impact on the ROK

It would seem that the DPRK's alleged nuclear programme has already had an impact on the ROK. The ROK Defense Ministry requested for an 18% increase in the defense budget - amounting to US\$11 billion - for 1991 from the Economic Planning Board.⁴¹ This indicates an unwillingness in the ROK to surrender its conventional advantage over the DPRK. It may then be surmised that the ROK will not allow the DPRK to gain nuclear

⁴⁰ See "Kim Il-sung's New Year Address 1989, at the Grand Conference Room of Kumsusan Assembly Hall, Pyongyang, 1 Jan 1989", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Spring 1989, Vol.13, No.1, pp.182-3.

⁴¹ "Defense Seeks 18% Increase in Budget", in *FBIS-EAS-90-160*, 17 Aug 1990.

take "measures for national survival" if the DPRK acquires nuclear weapons.⁴³

The suspicions about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions has also led to speculation about an Israeli-type attack by the ROK against Yongbyon.⁴⁴ Such an attack, of course, can never be ruled out absolutely. Taken by itself, the current suspicions could have already produced great instability in Korea. However, the fact that this has not happened indicates the influence of other factors of stability in the region.

In the late 1970s, when the Korean military balance still unambiguously favoured the DPRK (see table five), the nuclearization of the ROK was mooted as a means of correcting this military imbalance.⁴⁵ Several factors prevented this from happening: U.S. pressure, the fear of a preemptive DPRK attack, and the fear of escalating the Korean arms race to unprecedented levels. If conclusive evidence of the DPRK's alleged nuclear ambitions came forward, it would be difficult for the ROK to remain a non-nuclear power.

It is unclear if the DPRK ever considered any of the arguments raised

⁴³ What this means exactly is unclear. Several options for the ROK can be easily identified, though, and these will be examined later in this chapter.

⁴⁴ James Cotton, "North Korean Isolation and the Prospects for National Unification", in *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Winter 1990, Vol.II, No.2, p.164.

⁴⁵ Ernest W. Lefever, *Nuclear Arms in the Third World: U.S. Policy Dilemma* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1979), ch.5.

TABLE 5

BALANCE OF MILITARY POWER IN KOREA, 1975-1980

	1975-1976		1976-1977		1977-1978	
DESCRIPTION	DPRK	ROK	DPRK	ROK	DPRK	ROK
ARMY: ACTIVE/RESERVE ('000)	460/250	560/1000	430/ -	520/1000	430/ -	560/1000
ARMOUR	1130	1000	1350	1340	1950	1380
NAVY: MAJOR COMBATANTS	26	16	26	16	35	16
AMPHIBIOUS	-	80	-	88	90	91
AIR FORCE: COMBAT AIRCRAFT	588	216	600	204	630	335
TRANSPORT	190	44	100	-	225	46
	1978-1979		1979-1980			
DESCRIPTION	DPRK	ROK	DPRK	ROK		
ARMY: ACTIVE/RESERVE ('000)	440/ -	560/1000	560/260	520/1100		
ARMOUR	2100	1380	2300	860		
NAVY: MAJOR COMBATANTS	28	18	36	22		
AMPHIBIOUS	90	22	95	22		
AIR FORCE: COMBAT AIRCRAFT	655	276	565	254		
TRANSPORT	250	34	251	34		

Source: *The Military Balance* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies), 1975-76 to 1979-80 editions.

above; what is clear is that neither the USA, Japan nor the ROK consider it likely that the DPRK would have considered these arguments. However, the DPRK may well be aware of the detrimental effects nuclear weapons could have on the security environment of the region. The DPRK has stated that its obligation to sign the Safeguards Agreement must be balanced by its right to self-defense against the nuclear arsenal of the USFK.⁴⁶ As pointed out in Chapter One, the DPRK has to face the possibility of nuclear attack from the USA throughout the Korean War.

Few studies of this issue have focused on the factors of stability in Korea.⁴⁷ The debate in the ROK has so far focused on the policy options that ROK has, options such as preemptive attack against the Yongbyon facilities. However, factors of stability exist. For instance, even if the DPRK acquired nuclear weapons, the US commitment to the defense of the ROK, the uncertain nature of the US-ROK security treaty notwithstanding, acts as a significant deterrent against any state, let alone the DPRK, attacking the ROK. US leaders have stated in the past that the USA could use nuclear weapons in the defense of the ROK.⁴⁸ The USA-ROK mutual defense treaty of 1953 still remains in force, until both parties agree to its termination.⁴⁹(See Appendix Three)

Similarly, the political, economic and security interests of the DPRK's two traditional

⁴⁶ "North Korean Delegate Asks Japan to 'Advise' USA on Nuclear Safety Accord", in *SWB/FE/0985*, 1 Feb 1991.

⁴⁷ Andrew Mack has been one notable exception. See Mack, "North Korea and the bomb".

⁴⁸ Franklin B. Weinstein and Fuji Kamiya(eds.), *The Security of Korea: U.S. and Japanese Perspectives on the 1980s* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), p.108. Also see "Text of Joint Communique Following U.S.-Korean Security Consultative Meeting, 31 March 1982", in *Handbook*, pp.280-2.

⁴⁹ The clause in question in Article 5 of the said treaty.

sponsors, the USSR and the PRC, would be adversely affected by war in Korea, nuclear or conventional. And given the importance of the ROK to the economic modernization efforts of these two great powers, neither would welcome the prospect of an ROK devastated by nuclear attack. This interest alone acts as a significant deterrent to a DPRK nuclear attack on the ROK.⁵⁰ The argument that the DPRK may acquire nuclear weapons to nullify the USFK nuclear threat is also flawed. The USFK would only use nuclear weapons in the event of a Korean war, and only if the tide of the battle was going against it. For that to happen, the DPRK must initiate a war against the ROK. However, the lack of support from the USSR and the PRC virtually guarantees that the DPRK cannot support and maintain such a war effort.⁵¹ The third deterrent to another Korean war lies in the USFK's probable response to any DPRK-initiated military action against the ROK.

That does not mean that the DPRK-ROK relationship has not been altered by the suspicion of the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. However, this writer suggests that the existing impact has been purely rhetorical. During OPERATION DESERT STORM, the ROK President Roh Tae Woo warned of the possibility of the DPRK using the diverted world attention to launch an invasion of the DPRK;⁵² the DPRK countered with a warning of a possible ROK invasion,⁵³ and subsequently raised the combat readiness of the KPA.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Despite the strained DPRK-USSR relationship, the DPRK still has to ensure that it does not become totally alienated from the USSR. The USSR, after all, had supported the DPRK in the past, and it may still want to support the DPRK, given some changes in the latter.

⁵¹ Larry A. Niksch, "The Military Balance on the Korean Peninsula", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Summer 1986, Vol.10, No.2, pp.265-7.

⁵² "No Tae-u warns of threat from North", in *SWB/FE/0985*, 1 Feb 1991.

⁵³ "DPRK says South may use Gulf war as cover to attack North", in *SWB/FE/0975*, 21 Jan 1991.

However, the obstacles to such a development have already been outlined.

Nonetheless, the USA-ROK security alliance seems set to change. Both have already agreed to gradually shift command of the UNC to the ROK.⁵⁵ Despite the ROK's insistence that a total US withdrawal from the ROK is impermissible,⁵⁶ the total withdrawal of the USFK now seems inevitable. The USA and the ROK have already agreed to withdraw all USFK nuclear weapons from the ROK.⁵⁷ What this indicates is the growing ability of the ROK to cater to its own security needs and the increasing redundancy of the USFK, further exemplified by the Korean fighter programme.⁵⁸ At the same time, these developments have occurred at a time of suspicions about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. This indicates either a perception of the limited ability of a nuclear-armed DPRK to destabilize the security environment than publicly admitted, or limited confidence in the DPRK's ability to acquire nuclear weapons in the first place.

This chapter has attempted to outline the impact of the suspicions of the DPRK's

⁵⁴ "North Korean Army orders mobilisation", in *SWB/FE/1008*, 28 Feb 1991.

⁵⁵ "First Steps for Armed Forces Operational Control", in *FBIS-EAS-90-222*, 16 Nov 1990. The DPRK labelled this as a "petty trick . . . to cover . . . their (the USA) true nature as an aggressor". Also see "NODONG SINMUN Views U.S.-ROK Talks", in *FBIS-EAS-90-223*, 19 Nov 1990. In the event that command of the UNC does shift to the ROK, the nuclear forces deployed by the USFK will probably be withdrawn.

⁵⁶ "Security Consultative Meeting with U.S. Viewed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-224*, 20 Nov 1990.

⁵⁷ "S.Korea will do away with nuclear weapons, Roh declares", in *ST*, 9 Nov 1991; and "Washington, Seoul 'agree to US withdrawal of nuclear arms in S.Korea", in *The Sunday Times*, 10 Nov 1991.

⁵⁸ "Minister Confirms Korean Fighter Programme Review", in *FBIS-EAS-90-213*, 2 Nov 1990.

nuclear ambitions on the security environment of Northeast Asia, particularly on the Korean peninsula. It has attempted to show that these suspicions have not had the necessarily destabilizing impact on the Northeast Asian security environment. In particular, strategic stability in Korea has not been necessarily affected adversely.

Nonetheless, the status quo may contain potential seeds of future instability. Should current trends in the Korean military balance continue unabated, the prospect of a militarily superior ROK becomes a very real probability. Such a situation is probably anathema to the DPRK. This possibility could have prompted the DPRK to seek an equalizer in nuclear weapons. That does not necessarily affect the security environment adversely, but it could have grave consequences for the prospect of arms control and reunification in Korea. This issue will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

In this chapter, the impact of the suspicions of the DPRK's nuclear ambitions on the inter-related processes of arms control and reunification in Korea will be examined. Both Koreas have stipulated that before progress in reunification is possible, arms control measures have to be institutionalized first. As such, this chapter will discuss the impact the suspicions of the DPRK's nuclear ambitions have had on the arms control process in Korea, before moving on to examine its impact on Korean reunification.

From the perspective of Korean reunification, there has been little progress in inter-Korean arms control negotiations. This lack of progress can be attributed to two factors: the lack of mutual trust in each Korean state, and the different approaches to arms control each has adopted. The failure to agree on arms control only serves to reinforce this sense of mutual distrust.

ARMS CONTROL IN KOREA

It has been argued that arms control between adversaries is possible only if these states perceive an interdependence of security needs between them.¹ Arms control is thus possible only if these states do not see security as a zero sum game. In the context of Korea, neither Korean state can enhance its own security unilaterally without threatening the security of the other. However, this perception of security interdependence appears to be absent in Korea. In such an environment, it is little wonder that there has been little progress in arms

¹ Nam Joo-hong, "How Much Is Enough? The Politics of Arms Control in Korea", in *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Summer 1990, Vol. XXI, No. 2, p.184.

THE IMPACT OF UNCERTAINTY ON ARMS CONTROL AND REUNIFICATION IN KOREA

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control.

The ROK Approach to Arms Control

The ROK approach to arms control reflects the European experience, in calling for confidence-building measures (CBMs) between the two Koreas before real arms control measures can be discussed.² In other words, both Koreas need to develop a sense of mutual trust before they can achieve arms control agreements. This approach would appear to be most applicable to Korea, given the deep-rooted mutual distrust. Indeed, Trevor Findlay has argued in support of classic CBMs in Korea as a precursor to Korean arms control agreements.³ However, where CBMs have been utilized in Korea, the effect has more often been counterproductive; instead of mutual trust, greater mutual distrust has been the result thus far. Part of the problem lies in the fact that the degree of support for CBMs in both Koreas remains unclear. While both Korean states officially support CBMs, it will be suggested later that actions often belie official policy.

In any case, the DPRK has argued that CBMs are only auxiliary aspects of arms control.⁴ As such, the DPRK has never fully accepted the ROK's proposals for CBMs, despite some points of similarity in their respective positions.⁵ However, despite the

² "European style Arms Control Viewed for Korea", in *FBIS-EAS-90-169*, 30 Aug 1990. Also see Thomas L. Wilborn, "Arms Control and ROK Relations with the DPRK", in *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Winter 1990, Vol.II, No.2, pp.134-8.

³ Trevor Findlay, *Asia/Pacific CSBMs: A Prospectus* Peace Research Centre Working Paper 90, 1990, pp.27-8.

⁴ "UN Delegate Speaks on Asia-Pacific Situation", in *FBIS-EAS-90-021*, 31 Jan 1990.

⁵ The DPRK and the ROK appear to agree on the general principles that should govern arms control agreements in Korea. What they differ over are the instruments of arms control. For instance, both Korean states have called for the adoption of a pact of non-aggression; however, both attach conditions the other state finds unacceptable. Similarly, both Korean states agree on the need to reduce arms levels in Korea; both

absence of a favourable DPRK response to the ROK's proposals, the ROK has recently decided to initiate unilateral CBMs. For instance, the ROK decided to scale down the 1991 'Team Spirit' military exercise with the USFK.⁶ Recently, the ROK revealed an annual USFK-ROKAF exercise, called 'Foal Eagle', that had been conducted for the last 20 years.⁷ The revelation of this exercise could possibly part of an overall ROK attempt at creating an atmosphere conducive to successful DPRK-ROK talks.

These moves by the ROK may be attempts by the ROK to accommodate the DPRK's concerns about the issue of USFK-ROKAF military exercises. The DPRK has in the past branded the 'Team Spirit' exercises as obstacles to peace and stability in Korea that will "poison the atmosphere of dialogue between the North and the South of Korea."⁸ However, the sincerity of these ROK moves may be questioned. For instance, they could have been no more than mere public relations exercises, designed to degrade the international image of the DPRK, thereby improving the ROK's international image.⁹

What this discussion illustrates so far is that the arms control process in Korea still faces many obstacles. In the first place, the different aims and tactics of the two Korean

differ over how arms reduction should be achieved.

⁶ "Japanese Paper Reports 'Team Spirit' Reduction", in *FBIS-EAS-90-171*, 4 Sept 1990. Also see "US-Seoul military exercises 'to continue but on a reduced scale'", in *ST*, 28 Oct 1991.

⁷ See "US and S.Korea plan massive military exercise", in *ST*, 30 Oct 1991. In the past, the conducting of this exercise had often led to increased inter-Korean tensions, and DPRK accusations of war-mongering levelled against the US and the ROK.

⁸ "Foreign Ministry Holds Weekly News Briefing", in *FBIS-CHI-90-041*, 1 March 1990.

⁹ The ROK could have anticipated the DPRK still posing obstacles to progress in arms control and reunification. However, this remains pure speculation.

states prevent any success in arms control negotiations.¹⁰ From the ROK perspective, three obstacles to arms control agreements remain:¹¹ the continuing perception of military imbalances in the respective military forces, the lack of political and economic change in the DPRK, and the sense of mutual distrust. To exacerbate matters, the political elites in both Korean states want to focus public attention on external threats and the corresponding need to increase military spending. Under such circumstances, arms control measures would be virtually impossible to achieve.¹²

The DPRK Approach to Arms Control

The DPRK approach to Korean arms control focuses primarily on the need for arms control and reduction agreements; the DPRK has called for the mutual phased reduction of both military forces down to a force level of 100 000 combat personnel on each side.¹³ Because of the differences in both Koreas' respective approaches, as already pointed out, it is little wonder that these DPRK proposals have not been well received in the ROK.

The ROK response to such DPRK calls has been to focus on the disparities in the organization of the respective military forces. In particular, the ROK has alleged that, due to its particular socio-economic and political organizations, the DPRK is able to mobilize its reserve forces much faster than the ROK.¹⁴ Hence, the DPRK would still enjoy the military advantage, even though both military forces would have 100 000 active combat personnel.

¹⁰ Peter Polomka, "Security Issues on the Korean Peninsula", in *Security and arms control in the Pacific*, pp.118-22.

¹¹ Lho Kyongsoo, *op.cit.*, pp.189-201.

¹² Segal, *The Soviet Union and the Pacific*, p.127.

¹³ "Yon Hyong-muk's Keynote Speech", in *FBIS-EAS-90-173*, 6 Sept 1990.

¹⁴ Niksch, *op.cit.*, pp.257-8.

The element of distrust has been further enhanced by the suspicions about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. The ROK perceives the current uncertainty as part of a ploy by the DPRK to gain greater leverage over the negotiations on a variety of issues, including Korean arms control and reunification.¹⁵ But it remains to be seen how the current uncertainty could allow the DPRK to gain the advantage in inter-Korean relations at the moment. This would certainly be true as long as the ROK still enjoys the US nuclear umbrella, the existing uncertainty of this nuclear umbrella notwithstanding. Even if the US nuclear umbrella was not extended over the ROK, the DPRK could never explicitly threaten the ROK with nuclear weapons, as this would provide conclusive evidence to the ROK of the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. Once this confirmation is received, the ROK would be hard pressed to remain a non-nuclear power. The likely result of such a development has already been discussed.

KOREAN REUNIFICATION

It has been argued that the post-Armistice trend indicates a movement away from, not toward, the reunification of the two Koreas.¹⁶ If that is correct, then the current situation does not portend well for Korean reunification. The inability of the two Koreas to agree on a methodology of arms control is certainly indicative of that trend.

Great Power Interests

The improvements in great power relations may ultimately affect the process of Korean reunification. It has been suggested by some commentators that one of the key

¹⁵ "Nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula Urged", in *FBIS-EAS-90-181*, 18 Sept 1990.

¹⁶ Donald Stone MacDonald, *The Koreans: Contemporary Politics and Society* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1986), p.258.

determinants of Korean reunification will be the interests of the great powers.¹⁷ One development that appears to have allowed the two Koreas to attempt to open channels of communication in the 1970s was superpower detente.¹⁸ The same feature in great power relations in the late 1980s appears to have allowed both Korean states to make overtures to either superpower, although the ROK has been more successful with the USSR than the DPRK with the USA.

Both Koreas have claimed to be more optimistic about the prospects of reunification. Despite the DPRK's unilateral cancellation of inter-Korean talks in 1986¹⁹, a new element of pragmatism appears to have affected that DPRK's approach to reunification.²⁰ Evidence of this apparent pragmatism may be found in the DPRK's willingness to engage in schemes of cultural and economic cooperation and exchange.²¹ In an apparent attempt to address the DPRK's concerns, the ROK decided to scale down the 1991 'Team Spirit' exercise.²² Initially, the USA planned to deploy 50 000 troops for this exercise²³, overall manpower

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.262. Also see Lyou Byung-Hwa, *Peace and Unification in Korea and International Law* Occasional Paper 2 (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 1986), ch.3.

¹⁸ Kim Ilpyong J., "The Major Powers and the Korean Triangle", in *Two Koreas - One Future?*, pp.120-1.

¹⁹ This was due ostensibly to the 1986 'Team Spirit' exercise.

²⁰ Kwak Tae-Hwan, "North Korean and South Korea: Toward Peaceful Coexistence", in *The Foreign Relations of North Korea*, pp.347-52.

²¹ Of course, the DPRK's willingness to engage in such schemes are probably also influenced by sheer necessity.

²² "Removing 'Confrontation' Urged", in *FBIS-EAS-90-129*, 5 July 1990.

²³ "'Provisional Agreement' Reached on 'Team Spirit'", in *FBIS-EAS-90-206*, 24 Oct 1990.

deployments for this exercise would be reduced by 30%.²⁴ Eventually, the USA deployed 18 000 troops for this exercise²⁵, in an attempt by the USA to be more flexible on this issue.²⁶

Nonetheless, the issue of the USFK remains. The DPRK has argued that the continued presence of the USFK will obstruct all reunification efforts.²⁷ In light of this, the reunification of Korea appears unlikely in the near future, as it is unlikely that the USFK will be withdrawn from the ROK *per se*.²⁸ This is despite the absence of clearcut ROK support for the USFK.²⁹ At the same time, the Korean status quo is acceptable to the USA³⁰, as it is to the USSR and the PRC.

From the Soviet perspective, a foothold in the Korean peninsula appears to be in their security interests; as such, a reunified Korea is unlikely to be in their interests.³¹ At the same time, the USSR recognizes that the ROK's economic success makes reunification under the DPRK increasingly unlikely. However, the USSR has encouraged inter-Korean economic

²⁴ "Official Cited on Size of Team Spirit Exercise", in *FBIS-EAS-90-246*, 21 Dec 1990.

²⁵ "South Korea says Team Spirit is the smallest ever", in *SWB/FE/1008*, 28 Feb 1991.

²⁶ "U.S. Envoy Urges North To Help Lower Tensions", in *FBIS-EAS-90-247*, 24 Dec 1990.

²⁷ "Daily Urges Withdrawing US Troops from ROK", in *FBIS-EAS-90-129*, 5 July 1990.

²⁸ The withdrawal of the USFK must be distinguished from two related events - the planned withdrawal of USFK nuclear weapons, and the handing over of command of the UNC to the ROK.

²⁹ Kihl Young Whan, "Reexamining the United States Security Role in Korea", p.51.

³⁰ Lyou Byung-Hwa, *op.cit.*, pp.112-9.

³¹ Joseph M.Ha and Linda Beth Jensen, "Soviet Policy Toward North Korea", in *The Foreign Relations of North Korea*, pp.139-67.

cooperation through third countries.³² Does this indicate an increasing Soviet willingness the part of the USSR to accept a reunified Korea? It may , although an alternative explanation is possible. It now appears that the USSR feels that the DPRK will go the same way of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). In the likely event that the ROK eventually assimilates the DPRK after the death of Kim Il Sung, the USSR would thus seek to establish as good credentials with the likely political elites in the reunified Korea as possible.³³ This means being seen to encourage Korean reunification.

The PRC has appeared to be more staunch a supporter of the DPRK.³⁴ However, as reunification on the DPRK's terms is increasingly unlikely, the question is whether or not the PRC would accept a Korea under the ROK's aegis. Given the apparently contradictions inherent in the PRC's regional interests³⁵, an answer to this question may not be possible. However, an educated guess may be possible. The PRC appears to have decided to step up its relations with the ROK.³⁶ Recently, the PRC, along with the USA, the USSR and Japan, expressed increasing concern about the possibility of a nuclear-armed DPRK.³⁷ It also appears that the DPRK dropped its call to the ROK for joint United Nations (UN)

³² "Soviet Scholar Advises North-South Economic Exchanges", in *FBIS-EAS-90-176*, 11 Sept 1990.

³³ James Cotton, "Seoul-seeking Gorbachev dumps Pyongyang", in *ST*, 24 April 1991.

³⁴ "Commentator Discusses Reunification of Korea", in *FBIS-CHI-90-125*, 28 June 1990.

³⁵ On the one hand, ROK-PRC trade is increasing year after year, and ROK-PRC trade now outstrips DPRK-PRC trade. On the other hand, the PRC may still have important security interests in the DPRK.

³⁶ "The pace quickens", in *Far Eastern Economic Review* (hereafter *FEER*), 1 Aug 1991.

³⁷ "North Korea nuclear fears", in *JDW*, 25 May 1991.

membership only after pressure to do so from the PRC.³⁸ These developments indicate, albeit tenuously, that PRC support for the DPRK is more rhetorical than actual. If that is true, then the PRC may ultimately accept the reunification of Korea under the ROK's aegis.

Korean Positions on the Issue of Reunification³⁹

The DPRK had grounds for optimism at the start of the October 1990 round of talks. DPRK Premier Yon Hyong-muk's speech at the start of the talks focused on the similarities and differences in the two Korean approaches to reunification. He noted that the two Koreas had agreed on the need for common underlying principles to govern future discussions, that both Koreas recognised that these problems needed to be solved, and that there were similarities between specific issues.⁴⁰ Significantly, however, Yon also dwelt on the differences between the two Koreas over the prioritization of the problems to be addressed, including the USFK. The ROK's refusal to accept the DPRK's prioritization of these problems received criticism from Yon.⁴¹

The ROK was more cautious, stating that unless the DPRK showed greater flexibility, little progress could be expected.⁴² In retrospect, it appears clear that neither state was willing to be flexible regarding the contentious issues. The ROK refused to accept the DPRK's proposal for phased bilateral force reductions, just as the DPRK refused to accept

³⁸ "Visit by Chinese Premier - Revised position on UN membership", in *Keesing's Record of World Events*, April 1991.

³⁹ The discussion will be based on the inter-Korean Prime Ministerial-level negotiations on reunification.

⁴⁰ "'Text' of Yon Hyong-muk's 'Speech'", in *FBIS-EAS-90-291*, 17 Oct 1990.

⁴¹ "Reportage on 'High-Level Talks' Continues", in *FBIS-EAS-90-202*, 18 Oct 1990.

⁴² "Reportage Covering Premiers' Meeting in Pyongyang", in *FBIS-EAS-90-201*, 17 Oct 1990.

the ROK's precondition for CBMs first. The DPRK exacerbated this problem by approaching Japan for economic aid.⁴³ But despite the disagreements, both Koreas at least agreed to another round of negotiations.

The December round started off with the DPRK claim that it would unveil a new package of proposals of "epochal significance".⁴⁴ This was to merge the DPRK's proposed Non-aggression pact with the ROK's call for reconciliation, cooperation and non-aggression.⁴⁵ To the DPRK, this proposal demonstrated the DPRK's willingness to accommodate the ROK's security concerns. More interestingly, the DPRK also stated that the security of Korea could no longer be seen exclusively as a zero sum game.⁴⁶

However, the ROK had again been pessimistic about the prospect of agreement between the two Koreas.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, no agreement, save to hold yet another round of talks in February 1991, was reached.

The DPRK spokesman, Ahn Pyong-suk, had warned that a failure to suspend 'Team Spirit' could jeopardize the following round of talks.⁴⁸ Subsequently, the DPRK suspended the fourth round, on the basis that 'Team Spirit' was still going to be conducted, the DPRK's earlier protestations notwithstanding; also at issue was the ROK's increased alertness during

⁴³ The ROK subsequently took the stand that Prime-Ministerial talks were of primarily ceremonial value. See "Seoul Takes 'Harder Tone' Toward North", in *FBIS-EAS-90-201*, 17 Oct 1990.

⁴⁴ "Reportage Covering Third High-Level Talks", in *FBIS-EAS-90-238*, 11 Dec 1990.

⁴⁵ Reportage on 3d 'High-Level' Talks", in *FBIS-EAS-90-240*, 13 Dec 1990.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ "North's Yon Hyong-muk's Agenda Previewed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-237*, 10 Dec 1990.

⁴⁸ "N Spokesman 'Ominous' on Next Round of Talks", in *FBIS-EAS-90-241*, 14 Dec 1990.

the recent Gulf War.⁴⁹ The DPRK also accused the ROK of engaging in "anti-dialogue, anti-peace and anti-reunification commotions". The ROK however, saw the DPRK's overtures as part of an overall plan to reunify Korea under the DPRK's aegis.⁵⁰ This merely reinforces the deep mutual distrust in both Koreas. All this occurred while in Roh Tae Woo's 1991 January New Year's message, Roh gave the impression that the situation in Korea was stabilizing, and maturing, and that a realistic approach to reunification was possible.⁵¹

Problems in the Korean Approaches

To the ROK, three factors have stalemated inter-Korean negotiations in the early 1980s. They are:

- a. the diametrically opposed approaches to the issues of peace and reunification;
- b. the unwillingness of either state to accept the security concerns and other interests of the other as legitimate; and
- c. the continual harping on the USFK issue by the DPRK.⁵²

The different approaches has been the greatest obstacle to reunification in the past.⁵³ However, both appear to have made some progress in trying to accommodate the other's interests and concerns. For instance, the DPRK stated recently that it would respond

⁴⁹ "North Korea Cancels High-Level North-South Talks", SWB/FE/1000, 19 Feb 1991.

⁵⁰ "South Korea Criticizes North for Cancelling Talks", in SWB/FE/1000, 19 Feb 1991.

⁵¹ "President No Tae-u Speaks at News Conference", in FBIS-EAS-9-005, 8 Jan 1990.

⁵² Kwak Tae-Hwan, "North Korea and South Korea", pp.339-47.

⁵³ Hideshi Takesada, "Korean Security and Unification in the Detente Era", in *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Summer 1990, Vol.II, No.1, pp.179-89. Also see Kihl Young Whan, *Politics and Policies in Divided Korea*, ch.8.

favourably to even a partial withdrawal of the USFK⁵⁴; this was a change from its initial position that the USFK must be withdrawn *in toto*, as it constitutes a serious obstacle to reunification. The DPRK also stated that it would consider the ROK's stand on CBMs in formulating its proposals for the next arms control and reunification negotiations.

Evaluation of Reunification Efforts

All this presents a mixed picture for Korean reunification. On the one hand, inter-Korean dialogue, particularly on the issue of reunification, is becoming increasingly sophisticated.⁵⁵ On the other hand, because there is as yet no arms control agreement, prospects for reunification remain dim.⁵⁶ Proposals for arms control agreements, indeed any proposals for inter-Korean cooperation, made by either Korean state appear to be designed more as a means of attacking the other than as genuine efforts at seeking a solution to the problem of reunification. For example, the ROK perceives a lack of sincerity in the DPRK's various calls for talks.⁵⁷ But the ROK also appears to be guilty of such behaviour. The ROK's stand is that once the DPRK's policies toward the ROK have been de-ideologized, the basis of reconciliation and reunification will be solidified.⁵⁸

A conflicting signal could possibly be seen in Roh's 7 July 1988 address on this issue

⁵⁴ "North Korea promises response if US troops partially withdraw from South Korea", *SWB/FE/0705*, 6 March 1990.

⁵⁵ Yun Hong Chul, "The Unification Dialogue Between The Two Koreas in The 1990s", in *Asian Perspective*, Fall-Winter 1990, Vol.14, No.2, pp.79-80.

⁵⁶ Wilborn, *op.cit.*, pp.130-2.

⁵⁷ *White Paper*, pp.349-62. Also see "Possible Changes in DPRK Policy Viewed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-181*, 18 Sept 1990; and "North Korean Premier's speech at high-level talks in Seoul", in *SWB/FE/0947*, 14 Dec 1990. The ROK perceives that these DPRK calls have been timed to coincide with periods of political transition and instability in the ROK.

⁵⁸ *White Paper*, pp.371-4.

of reunification, which the ROK sees as an amalgamation of the reunification policies of both Koreas.⁵⁹ To the ROK, it indicates its increasing willingness to accept a unified Korea with differing socio-economic and political systems.⁶⁰ Inter-Korean cooperation would foster in Koreans a shared sense of community, which would act as the basis for eventual Korean reunification. In addition, it would mean that the ROK recognizes the DPRK's right to seek relations with other states. This stand corresponds with the DPRK's Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo (DCRK) proposal, which was first enunciated by Kim Il Sung in 1980.⁶¹ However, the ROK has reacted to the DPRK's DCRK proposals with scepticism.⁶² The ROK also argues that unless there is a change in the northern regime, no real success in reunification efforts is possible.⁶³ With such a stand, it is little wonder that there has been little progress in reunification efforts.

At the same time, the ROK's so-called *Nordpolitik* has been seen by senior ROK leaders as a means of isolating the DPRK internationally.⁶⁴ Officially, the ROK's *Nordpolitik* is to provide the means by which the DPRK can be opened up to the international

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.430-1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.383-90.

⁶¹ "Kim Il Song on Unification, October 10, 1980", in Hinton, *op.cit.* It should be noted that in his initial enunciation of this policy, Kim Il Sung made no explicit mention of the so-called "one Korea, two systems" formula that characterized similar later pronouncements on reunification by the DPRK leadership.

⁶² Shinn Rinn-Sup, "Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo: Motives, Contexts, and Implications", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Winter 1990, Vol.XIV, No.4, pp.626-48. Shinn argues that there are many internal contradictions in the DPRK's DCRK proposal. For example, the call to "democratize" the ROK contradicts with the "one Korea, two systems" formula.

⁶³ Suh Dae-Sook, "Changes in North Korea and Inter-Korean Relations", in *Korea and World Affairs*, Winter 1990, Vol.XIV, No.4, pp.612-17.

⁶⁴ Cotton, "Pyongyang Cast Adrift", p.276. Also see Suh Dae-Sook, *op.cit.*, pp.621-5.

arena. It is also meant to provide for balanced economic development in the Korean peninsula, thus creating an atmosphere conducive to eventual reunification. On the issue of DPRK-Japan relations, for instance, the ROK's reaction tends to belie its official position on the DPRK's relations with other states, as indicated above; as already pointed out, the ROK did not react favourably to this development. To be fair, DPRK-Japan relations may not be in the same category as the DPRK's relations with other states.⁶⁵ It is entirely possible that the DPRK-Japan relationship is a means for the DPRK to pressurize the ROK.

The fact thus remains - neither side appears to have a great deal of trust in the other. In such an atmosphere, regardless of how sincere either Korean state may be, any effort toward reunification is almost definitely bound to fail.⁶⁶ Both Koreas' objectives regarding reunification remain opposed.⁶⁷ In any case, it would appear that while the ROK desires reunification, it "sees too many benefits from its present separate and protected status."⁶⁸

KOREAN PROLIFERATION AND KOREAN REUNIFICATION

Despite the problem of nuclear proliferation, some progress toward reunification

⁶⁵ In particular, the DPRK's relations with other non-regional states may not be the same as the DPRK's relations with Japan, which, as this study has tried to illustrate so far, plays an important role in the security environment of Korea, particularly the security of the ROK.

⁶⁶ "Commentary Views Korea's Reunification", in *FBIS-EAS-90-146*, 30 July 1990. The summit between the respective Korean prime ministers was expected to have a great impact on inter-Korean relations, provided that both prime ministers could reach a common understanding on the problems of distrust and the differing socio-economic and political systems. Such understanding has yet to be achieved. Also see Zhang Jinfang, "A Big Step to Korea's Reunification", in *BR*, 27 Aug-2 Sept 1990, Vol.33, No.35.

⁶⁷ Koh Byung Chul, "Policy Toward Reunification", in *The Foreign Policy of the Republic of Korea*, pp.69-105.

⁶⁸ Segal, *Rethinking the Pacific*, p.246.

appears to have been achieved. For one, the three rounds of Prime Ministerial talks were conducted under the cloud of suspicion about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. The September 1990 round of talks produced a military 'hotline' agreement.⁶⁹ This is an important CBM, and has potential in dispelling the deep-rooted distrust between the two Koreas that has posed the greatest obstacle so far to reunification efforts. Despite the absence of other concrete agreements, the September 1990 round was seen as a good start for high-level reunification efforts.⁷⁰

After the October 1990 round of talks, the ROK Prime Minister reported that he got the impression that Kim Il Sung would welcome a summit between the Korean Presidents.⁷¹ Before the start of this round, Kim Il Sung had stated that the suspension of the 1991 'Team Spirit' exercise would be one condition for the continuation of such talks.⁷² That did not happen, but that did not stop the third round of talks, held in December 1990.

In December 1990, Roh stated that the next few years would be crucial to determining the success of reunification efforts.⁷³ The fact that Roh could indicate even some possibility of success may be significant. Roh's USSR visit later that month was hailed by the ROK media as a step that would "advance the day of peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula."⁷⁴

Despite the failure of the two Koreas to agree on the NAP and the suspension of 1991

⁶⁹ "First Day of Talks Summarized", in *FBIS-EAS-90-172*, 5 Sept 1990.

⁷⁰ "Korea's First High-Level Talks", in *BR*, 24-30 Sept 1990, Vol.33, No.39, p.11.

⁷¹ "Kang Briefs No Tae-u on Inter-Korean Talks", in *FBIS-EAS-90-203*, 19 Oct 1990.

⁷² "Kim Il-song Sets Conditions", in *FBIS-EAS-90-196*, 10 Oct 1990.

⁷³ "No Tae-u Interviewed on Summit Expectations", in *FBIS-EAS-90-237*, 10 Dec 1990.

⁷⁴ "Reportage on President No Tae-u's Moscow Visit", in *FBIS-EAS-90-241*, 14 Dec 1990.

'Team Spirit' exercise, the third round of talks ended with an agreement for a fourth round of talks, scheduled for February 1991. This round was subsequently postponed. However, the ROK Prime Minister Kang Yong-hun had stated in December 1990 that an NAP without first building up mutual trust and confidence in both Koreas and without first ending the mutual slander and accusation would be pointless.⁷⁵ That both states could accept the differences in their respective approaches may be seen as evidence of some progress at these talks.⁷⁶ However, the positions of both Koreas on the reunification issue may not be totally opposed.⁷⁷ Recently, both agreed to establish joint sub-committees for North-South exchange and cooperation, and for military and political affairs.⁷⁸ The normalized ROK-USSR relationship appears to have spurred on efforts by the DPRK to approach the ROK.⁷⁹

The interesting point of these recent developments is that the DPRK's alleged nuclear ambitions were not mentioned at all. At the October 1990 round of talks, the ROK argued that unless the DPRK showed greater flexibility in its approach to the issue of reunification, little progress could be expected.⁸⁰ But no mention of the DPRK's alleged nuclear

⁷⁵ "Further on North, South High-Level Talks", in *FBIS-EAS-90-240*, 13 Dec 1990.

⁷⁶ "Future of N-S High-Level Talks Assessed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-242*, 17 Dec 1990.

⁷⁷ "Commentary Endorses North, South Talks", in *FBIS-CHI-90-175*, 10 Sept 1990. For example, even the DPRK was beginning to see the need for CBMs before arms control agreements could be arrived at. Secondly, both Koreas, at least in their official positions, accept the possibility of having two separate and distinct socio-economic systems in the same country. See "North Korea's 'New Epochal Proposal' at High-Level Talks", in *SWB/FE/0946*, 13 Dec 1990.

⁷⁸ "South Korea Presents its Proposals at High-Level Talks", in *SWB/FE/0946*, 13 Dec 1990.

⁷⁹ "Turn in North Korean-Soviet Relations Analysed", in *FBIS-EAS-90-185*, 24 Sept 1990.

⁸⁰ "Reportage Covering Premiers' Meeting in Pyongyang", in *FBIS-EAS-90-201*, 17 Oct 1990.

ambitions was made in this round, nor at the December 1990 round of talks.

In the final analysis, however, what is noteworthy about the existing efforts by the two Koreas in this issue of reunification is the lack of significant progress made, Korean rhetoric notwithstanding.⁸¹ This appears to indicate that reunification, at least while Kim Il Sung remains in power, is unlikely if not impossible. At the same time, little mention of the DPRK's alleged nuclear ambitions has been made. However, it is worth noting that the ROK increased its efforts at encouraging inter-Korean dialogue only after 1989. This may indicate a concern in the ROK policy-making circles that a nuclear-armed DPRK could exert some degree of pressure on the ROK to accept reunification on the DPRK's terms.

However, it is difficult to see how nuclear weapons could provide the DPRK with the leverage in the reunification process. The possible nervousness in the ROK regarding the DPRK's alleged nuclear ambitions does not necessarily translate into political leverage for the DPRK. While it is true that the ROK appears to have put in greater effort into the reunification process, several alternative explanations for this exist. For instance, it could have been a propaganda ploy by the ROK for both internal and external consumption.⁸² Alternatively, since Kim Il Sung cannot live forever, the ROK could be trying to seize the initiative in the reunification process.

Even if the DPRK were to acquire nuclear weapons, it would be difficult to envisage

⁸¹ This appears to indicate the possibility that rhetoric is for internal consumption. In other words, such rhetoric may be to satisfy the great desire, particularly in the ROK population, for the reunification of the two Koreas, to give the impression that the ROK and DPRK governments are indeed working hard to realize this ambition.

⁸² The ROK could have calculated that it would not be likely for the DPRK to accept the ROK's various proposals. However, the act of presenting different proposals would make the ROK appear to be the party interested in reunification (the good guys), while the DPRK would pose as the obstacle (the bad guys).

the DPRK deploying these nuclear weapons in the reunification process. The DPRK cannot threaten the ROK with nuclear blackmail, without prompting a US response, the uncertainties of a US response notwithstanding. An ROK devastated by nuclear attack is antithetical to the political, economic and security interests of the USA and Japan. In any case, there appears little point in the DPRK inheriting an ROK that became a nuclear wasteland.

At the same time, what is being suggested in this chapter is that reunification efforts never stood much chance of success in the first place. Certainly, while Kim Il Sung remains in power, the prospect of Korean reunification remains slim; once Kim Il Sung passed from the political scene, it may be possible for both Koreas to reunite. That remains in the realm of pure speculation. While a nuclear-armed DPRK might pose several problems in the long run for Korean reunification, it appears for the moment that the suspicions about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions have had little impact on the processes of arms control and reunification. But that is only because arms control and reunification remains no more than remote possibilities.

CHAPTER FIVE

The preceding chapters have examined the security environment in Northeast Asia, and discussed the impact of the suspicions about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions on the security environment and the inter-related processes of arms control and renunciation in Korea. This chapter will summarize the preceding four chapters, and offer some concluding remarks. At the same time, having examined the impact of the suspicions about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions on these issues, some remarks can be made on whether or not the DPRK would want to acquire nuclear weapons.

IMPACT OF A NUCLEAR-CAPABLE DPRK

The Security Environment on Northeast Asia

From the outset, it is worth reiterating that horizontal nuclear proliferation will not necessarily destabilize the security environment. "The fundamental disturbance of the present international system will not automatically occur upon the manufacture of nuclear bombs by other countries."¹ This can be attributed to factors of stability in the present international system. Certainly, in Northeast Asia, these factors can be seen to exist.

None of the great powers in Northeast Asia would appear to welcome a nuclear-armed DPRK. In the first place, the great powers have increasing stakes in the Korean status quo. In particular, the four-power system surrounding the Korean peninsula has been regarded as favourable to maintaining the peace and stability of the region.² With the prospect of greater stability in great power relations, Korea is becoming increasingly important to the

¹ Rotecrance, *op.cit.*, p.312.

² Kim Kook-chin, *op.cit.*, p.495.

CONCLUSION

The preceding four chapters have outlined the security environment in Northeast Asia, and discussed the impact of the suspicions about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions on the security environment and the inter-related processes of arms control and reunification in Korea. This chapter will summarize the preceding four chapters, and offer some concluding remarks. At the same time, having examined the impact of the suspicions about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions on these issues, some remarks can be made on whether or not the DPRK would want to acquire nuclear weapons.

IMPACT OF A NUCLEAR-CAPABLE DPRK

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¹ Rosecrance, *op.cit.*, p.312.

² Kim Kook-chin, *op.cit.*, p.495.

overall peace and stability of the region.³ The great powers also have increasing stakes in an economically viable ROK.

In particular, the USSR and the PRC have to worry about the impact of a nuclear-armed DPRK on the flow of investment from the ROK into their respective economies. If evidence were to be found implicating either the USSR or the PRC in the DPRK's alleged nuclear weapons programme, such trade and investment from the ROK into these two great powers would surely cease. In any case, once clear evidence of the DPRK's alleged nuclear weapons programme becomes available, the ROK may find it hard to resist pressures for itself to become a nuclear power, its present non-nuclear declarations notwithstanding.⁴ Clearly, such a programme would require a substantial increase in the ROK's defense budget; this could have a further detrimental effect on the ROK's trade with the USSR and the PRC. However, damaged trade relations will not necessarily damage the security environment. Given the dependence on trade and investment from the ROK, neither the USSR nor the PRC would seek to antagonize the ROK in any way.⁵

In any case, a nuclear-armed DPRK, as a result of either Soviet or Chinese aid, would almost invariably force the USA and Japan to adopt a more hostile stance *vis-a-vis* the USSR and the PRC. None of the great powers would welcome such a situation, as it would probably necessitate another great power arms race. It is unlikely that either the USSR or

³ Sheldon Simon, "Security and Uncertainty in the North Pacific", in *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Winter 1990, Vol.II, No.2, p.83.

⁴ "Nuclear-Free South Korea Unlikely to Soften Pyongyang", in *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 11 Nov 1991.

⁵ In fact, a nuclear-armed DPRK may ultimately bring the USSR and the PRC closer to the ROK. Under existing conditions, both great powers would not want to endanger trade and investment from the ROK. A nuclear-armed DPRK may have to be openly denounced by the USSR and the PRC, if they are to ensure continued investment from the ROK.

the PRC can sustain another arms race. And while the USA's ability to sustain another arms race must be questioned, the same may not apply - indeed, it does not - to Japan. Japan recently decided to bring its defense spending back to the 1% ceiling. Either situation - a nuclear-armed DPRK, or renewed hostilities between the USA, the USSR or the PRC - is likely to exert great pressure on Japan to abandon its self-imposed 1% ceiling on defense spending. Worse still, a nuclear-armed DPRK may, however improbable it may seem, stimulate the pro-nuclear lobby within Japan. A nuclear-armed Japan is a prospect that neither of the other great powers, nor any other Asian state, is likely to accept.

Having said that, it appears clear that the current suspicions about the DPRK's nuclear ambitions have not had the detrimental effect on the security environment as alarmists have feared. The alarm that has greeted the news of the DPRK's suspected nuclear ambitions has not been commensurate with the degree to which the security environment has been destabilized by this development. This may be attributed to several factors of stability in the region; the probable US nuclear umbrella over the ROK, and the probability of a US retaliatory strike against the DPRK in the event it attacked the ROK, are the most significant factors.

Even the isolated impact of the suspicions of the DPRK's nuclear ambitions on the Korean peninsula may not be as bad as feared. Precisely because of the probable US nuclear umbrella over the ROK, a nuclear-armed DPRK would not be able to attack the ROK, without incurring unacceptable losses themselves. The US commitment to the defense of the ROK appears to be solid, even if the US were to withdraw from the ROK, something the PRC has called for.⁶ What remains uncertain is whether or not the USA would use nuclear

⁶ "Jiang Urges U.S.A. Out of ROK", in *FBIS-CHI-90-051*, 15 March 1990.

weapons in such a mission.⁷ But in any case, there appears to be little point in the DPRK utilizing nuclear weapons to reunite the two Koreas under its aegis.⁸ This point alone could be a significant deterrent to any nuclear ambitions the DPRK may entertain.

The debate in the ROK regarding the issue at hand has apparently not considered any of the arguments raised in this study. However, that does not necessarily mean that the ROK is completely unaware of the arguments this study has raised. In fact, the ROK's reaction to this issue has been more muted, in terms of actual policy, than mere rhetoric would suggest. Two possibilities exist out of this situation: that the ROK does not believe that the DPRK can, or wants to, acquire nuclear weapons; or, that a nuclear-armed DPRK is really not as destabilizing as the rhetoric has made it out to be. In the meanwhile, the ROK continues its *Nordpolitik* strategy of isolating the DPRK internationally, and giving the DPRK's traditional allies a stake in the economic and political viability of the ROK. But why would the ROK then rely on such alarmist rhetoric? Would not such strategy only serve to alienate the two Koreas even further, reducing already remote chances of reunification? Is it not possible that such a strategy could backfire?

The exploration of these questions is really out of the purview of this study. Nonetheless, it may be fruitful to deviate from the intended focus of the study, and consider some of the possible answers. The alarmist rhetoric drummed up by the ROK could be a calculated act to ensure continued US and Japanese support; this could possibly result in better trading and economic investment and aid terms from these two great powers.

⁷ The point, made earlier, is that a US nuclear response to a conventional DPRK attack against the ROK is not guaranteed.

⁸ After all, the DPRK would inherit a nuclear wasteland. And considering that a large proportion of the ROK's industries are located in Seoul, a nuclear attack against Seoul would then destroy a large proportion of the ROK's economic strength.

Secondly, the alarmist rhetoric could serve to further isolate the DPRK internationally; this would have disastrous consequences on an already weak DPRK economy. The ROK could calculate that such trends only result in an ever-increasing pressure on the DPRK to accept the ROK's terms for reunification.

Thirdly, it is possible that the ROK *Nordpolitik* strategy could backfire.⁹ However, by providing the USSR and the PRC with stakes in the future economic and political viability of itself, the ROK seeks to ensure that both great powers would exert enough pressure on the DPRK, to prevent the latter from rash acts against the ROK. In other words, the DPRK would have to think twice before launching another invasion against the ROK.

It is also possible that the DPRK could, in the current situation, withdraw further into isolationism.¹⁰ To be sure, that has yet to happen. However, should the DPRK really withdraw into its shell further, this can only have a damaging effect on prospects for Korean reunification. The political and economic gulf between the two Koreas would only increase even further.

Korean Arms Control and Reunification

Before any discussion of this issue can resume, one question needs to be posed at this point. How likely was success in arms control negotiations and reunification in the first place? At the start of the December 1990 round of Prime Ministerial talks, delegates from both Koreas expressed pessimism about the prospects of success.¹¹ The examination of these inter-related processes in Chapter Four indicates that negotiations on arms control and

⁹ International isolation could induce a greater sense of desperation and recklessness in the DPRK; this would induce it to act with even less responsibility and restraint than it has in the past.

¹⁰ "YONHAP Details Outlook for 1991", *FBIS-EAS-90-251*, 31 Dec 1990.

¹¹ "North-South High-Level Talks Convene in Seoul", in *SWB/FE/0945*, 12 Dec 1990.

reunification were apparently conducted with little expectation of progress. Both Korean states have not deviated much from their original demands on the key issues. Rather, each side apparently seeks reunification on its own terms alone, at the expense of the other's. This has led to accusations from the DPRK, for instance, that the ROK seeks to perpetuate the division of Korea.¹²

The same comment applies to the arms control process in Korea. The various arms control proposals of either Korean state do not apparently take into consideration the security concerns of the other. In such negotiating conditions, it is little wonder that no real success has been recorded in this aspect of inter-Korean relations.

In the case of the ROK, while it has attempted to conduct dialogue with the DPRK, it has also continued its apparent *Nordpolitik* policy of isolating the DPRK internationally. As such, the ROK continued its efforts at improving its relations with the USSR and the PRC. The DPRK made strenuous efforts to ensure that the ROK-PRC relationship never progressed to the same point as ROK-USSR relations. In 1989 and 1990, despite the suspicions of the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, the two Koreas negotiated over a series of issues, albeit without much success.¹³ In such conditions where the likelihood of success was already slim, the impact of these suspicions has been minimal.

But to depict inter-Korean arms control and reunification negotiations as utter failures may not be entirely accurate. Minor progress has been achieved; these achievements have been discussed in Chapter Four. For example, both Korean premiers have visited the respective capital cities. In addition, the ROK decision to scale down successive 'Team

¹² "'Nodong Sinmun' accuses south of 'pursuing division' despite talks", in *SWB/FE/0946*, 13 Dec 1990.

¹³ These issues included arms control in Korea and reunification of the two Koreas.

Spirit' exercises may be an attempt to address the DPRK's genuine security concerns. Both Koreas were apparently near an agreement on cultural exchange and open DPRK-ROK borders. Such achievements occurred against the backdrop of the possible nuclearization of the DPRK.

To be sure, the ROK could have calculated that a nuclear-armed DPRK could be very destabilizing; its attempt to improve its relations with the DPRK could be to dissuade the DPRK from its alleged nuclear ambitions. This argument suffers from one major failing: the ROK would be surrendering the initiative to the DPRK. And there is little in Korean history to suggest that the ROK would ever want to do that.

An alternative response, though it has not so far been accepted, would be for the ROK to renounce its endorsement of the NPT, and openly declare its nuclear ambitions. The ROK has long been suspected of having great incentives to acquire an indigenous nuclear capability. And given the size of the ROK's existing nuclear energy programme, it could quickly outstrip the DPRK's own capability. The impact of such a development on the USA-ROK relationship would have to be carefully studied by the ROK. It remains outside the scope of this study to look into this issue; but suffice it to say that while the USA would not welcome a nuclear-armed ROK warmly, it would not necessarily conflict with US interests in Northeast Asia.¹⁴

Such considerations would probably not escape the DPRK's attention. The prospect of a nuclear-armed ROK alone would be a significant deterrent against any nuclear ambitions the DPRK may have. In other words, if the DPRK does plan to acquire nuclear weapons, it seems clear that any advantage the DPRK would enjoy from its nuclear status would be

¹⁴ This is providing that the ROK remained within the ambit of the USA-ROK security treaty.

short-lived. In the long term, the DPRK stands to lose more than to gain by engaging in horizontal nuclear proliferation.

What this study indicates is that a nuclear-armed DPRK is unlikely to destabilize the region much. That alone suggests that the DPRK may not necessarily have any nuclear ambitions. The destabilization of Northeast Asia by a nuclear-armed DPRK, as postulated by the great powers and the ROK, are still purely speculative. Firstly, it is not immediately obvious that the DPRK has, or plans to acquire, nuclear weapons. Secondly, if a nuclear-armed DPRK is as destabilizing as it is claimed by these states, then these states would surely act to counter such destabilization. In other words, these states would act to correct the strategic equilibrium of the region. Any conclusive evidence of the DPRK's nuclear ambitions would thus be greeted with much less concern than the official rhetoric would probably reflect. In other words, the acquisition of a nuclear weapon is not a necessarily destabilizing development; for that to occur, a complex web of inter-related factors must first be in place.

The point is that the ROK will not necessarily react to the nuclearization of the DPRK in a knee-jerk fashion. The current situation of uncertainty is far less destabilizing for the Northeast Asian security environment than official rhetoric has depicted. In any case, one must treat official rhetoric from either Korea about the other with some caution. The security paradigm in Korea being perceived as a zero sum game, either Korea would tend to overstate the threat posed by the other. The same situation could apply here.

The inability of a nuclear-armed DPRK to destabilize the region itself is a powerful deterrent to any nuclear ambitions the DPRK may actually have. Instead, it would seem that the DPRK has sought to utilize the uncertainty of the status quo to try to win for itself the

upper hand in inter-Korean relations. This may explain the DPRK's tendency to make contradictory statements about its nuclear ambitions. To some extent, as Chapter Four as tried to show, this appears to have worked.

However, the ROK concessions to the DPRK clearly do not far enough to assuage the DPRK's security concerns. It has already been pointed out that the ROKAF is seen as capable of deterring any conventional KPA attack. The need for the ROK to still depend on the USA may be a purely psychological hangover from the Korean War. As the ROK economy continues to grow, and as the ROK's technological base solidifies, this psychological hangover may dissipate.

In the final analysis, however, it appears unlikely that reunification can occur, at least not while Kim Il Sung remains in power. What happens after Kim Il Sung passes from the political scene is purely speculative; the scope of this study did not allow such speculation. The current unstable adversarial relationship between the two Koreas may be the likeliest source of future instability, but so far, another Korean War has not occurred. This has been due, in large part, to the desire of the great powers to avoid conflict in the region. That remains the greatest obstacle to nuclear proliferation in the Korean peninsula.

SOVIET-NORTH KOREAN TREATY OF ALLIANCE,
JULY 6, 1961¹

The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the Presidium of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly, striving to develop and strengthen the friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the DPRK, relations based on principles of socialist inter-nationalism; wishing to contribute to the maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in the Far East and throughout the whole world in accordance with the aims and principles of the United Nations; fully determined to render assistance and support to each other in case of an armed attack by some state or a coalition of states on one of the contracting parties; certain that the strengthening of friendship, neighbourliness, and cooperation between the Soviet Union and the DPRK meets the vital interests of the peoples of both states and will in the best way help their future economic and cultural development, have resolved to conclude this treaty, and have appointed as their plenipotentiaries:

The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet - Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers;

The Presidium of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly - Kim Il-song, chairman of the DPRK Council of Ministers.

Both plenipotentiaries, after exchanging their credentials, which were found to be in due form and full order, agreed on the following:

Article 1 - The contracting parties declare that they will continue to take actions aimed at insuring peace and security in the Far East and throughout the world, and they will make their contribution to the cause of the accomplishment of these lofty tasks.

In case one of the contracting parties becomes the object of an armed attack by some state of coalition of states and thus finds itself in a state of war, the other contracting party will immediately render it military and other assistance with all means at its disposal.

Article 2 - Each of the contracting parties undertakes to conclude no alliance or participate in no coalitions or actions or measures directed against the other contracting party.

Article 3 - The contracting parties will consult each other on all important international issues affecting the interests of both states, being guided by an effort to contribute to the consolidation of peace and general security.

Article 4 - Both contracting parties undertake, in the spirit of friendship and cooperation in accordance with the principles of equality and mutual respect for state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and noninterference in each other's internal affairs, to develop and strengthen economic and cultural contacts between the USSR and the DPRK, to render each other all

¹ Source: Harold C. Hinton, *Korea Under New Leadership: The Fifth Republic* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983), pp.255-6.

possible assistance, and carry out necessary cooperation in the economic and cultural fields.

Article 5 - Both contracting parties maintain that the unification of Korea must be carried out on a peaceful and democratic basis and that such settlement is in line both with the interests of the Korean people and the cause of maintaining peace in the Far East.

Article 6 - The treaty goes into force on the day of exchange of the instruments of ratification, which will take place in Pyongyang. The treaty remains in force for 10 years. If one of the contracting parties does not declare one year before the expiration of this term its desire to denounce the treaty, the treaty will continue in force for the next 5 years and will be prolonged in accordance with this rule.

Done in Moscow 6 July 1961 in two copies, each in the Russian and Korean languages, with both texts equally valid.

Signed: For the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, N.S.Khrushchev; for the Presidium of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly, Kim Il-song.

The Chairman of the People's Republic of China: Chou En-lai, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China,

The Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: Kim Il Song, Premier of the Cabinet of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

Who, have examined each other's full powers and found them in good and due form, have agreed on the following:

Article One

The contracting parties will continue to make every effort to safeguard the peace of Asia and the world and the security of all peoples.

Article Two

The contracting parties undertake jointly to adopt all measures to prevent aggression against either of the contracting parties of any state. In the event of one of the contracting parties being subjected to the armed attack of any state or several states jointly and thus being involved in a state of war, the other contracting party shall immediately render military and other assistance by all means at its disposal.

Article Three

Neither contracting party shall conclude any alliance directed against the other contracting party or take part in any bloc or in any action or measure directed against the other contracting party.

CHINESE-NORTH KOREAN TREATY OF ALLIANCE, JULY 11, 1961

The Chairman of the People's Republic of China and the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, determined in accordance with Marxism-Leninism and the principle of proletarian internationalism and on the basis of mutual respect for State Sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and mutual assistance and support, to make every effort to further strengthen and develop the fraternal relations of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance between the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to jointly guard the security of the two peoples, and to safeguard and consolidate the peace of Asia and the world, and deeply convinced that the development and the strengthening of the relations of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance between the two countries accord not only with the fundamental interests of the two peoples but also with the interests of the peoples all over the world, have decided for this purpose to conclude the present treaty and appointed as their plenipotentiaries:

The Chairman of the People's Republic of China: Chou En-lai, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China,

The Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: Kim Il Sung, Premier of the Cabinet of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

Who, have examined each other's full powers and found them in good and due form, have agreed on the following:

Article One

The contracting parties will continue to make every effort to safeguard the peace of Asia and the world and the security of all peoples.

Article Two

The contracting parties undertake jointly to adopt all measures to prevent aggression against either of the contracting parties of any state. In the event of one of the contracting parties being subjected to the armed attack of any state or several states jointly and thus being involved in a state of war, the other contracting party shall immediately render military and other assistance by all means at its disposal.

Article Three

Neither contracting party shall conclude any alliance directed against the other contracting party or take part in any bloc or in any action or measure directed against the other contracting party.

Article Four

The contracting parties will continue to consult with each other on all important international questions of common interests to the two countries.

Article Five

The contracting parties, on the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and in the spirit of friendly cooperation, will continue to render each other every possible economic and technical aid in the cause of socialist construction of the two countries and will continue to consolidate and develop economic, cultural, and scientific and technical cooperation between the two countries.

Article Six

The contracting parties hold that the unification of Korea must be realized along peaceful and democratic lines and that such a solution accords exactly with the national interests of the Korean people and the aim of preserving peace in the Far East.

Article Seven

The present treaty is subject to ratification and shall come into force on the day of exchange of instruments of ratification, which will take place in Pyongyang.

The present treaty will remain in force until the contracting parties agree on its amendment or termination.

Done in duplicate in Peking on the 11th day of July, 1961, in the Chinese and Korean languages, both texts being equally valid.

Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China
(signed) Chou En-lai

Plenipotentiary of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
(signed) Kim Il Sung

U.S.-ROK MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY, OCTOBER 1, 1953

Signed at Washington October 1, 1953; Ratification advised by the Senate of the United States of America, with an understanding, January 26, 1954; Ratified by the President of the United States of America, subject to the said understanding February 5, 1954; Ratified by the Republic of Korea, January 29, 1954; Ratification exchanged in Washington, November 17, 1954. Proclaimed by the President of the United States of America, December 1, 1954; Entered into force November 17, 1954.

The Parties to this Treaty,

Reaffirming their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments and desiring to strengthen the fabric of peace in the Pacific area,

Desiring to declare publicly and formally their common determination to defend themselves against external armed attack so that no potential aggressor could be under the illusion that either of them stands alone in the Pacific area,

Desiring further to strengthen their efforts for collective defense for the preservation of peace and security pending for the development of a more comprehensive and effective system of regional security in the Pacific area,

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

The Parties undertake to settle any international disputes in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations, or obligations assumed by any Party towards the United Nations.

ARTICLE II

The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of either of them, the political independence or security of either of the Parties is threatened by external armed attack. Separately or jointly, by self help and mutual aid, the Parties will maintain and develop appropriate means to deter armed attack and will take suitable measures in consultation and agreement to implement this Treaty and to further its purposes.

ARTICLE III

Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific area on either of the Parties in territories now under their respective administrative control, or hereafter recognized by one of the Parties as lawfully brought under the administrative control of the other, would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declare that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional process.

ARTICLE IV (ARTICLES/CHAPTERS)

The Republic of Korea grants, and the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose United States land, air and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined by mutual agreement.

ARTICLE V

The Treaty shall be ratified by the United States of America and the Republic of Korea in accordance with their respective constitutional processes and will come into force when the instruments of ratification thereof have been exchanged by them at Washington.

ARTICLE VI

This Treaty shall remain in force indefinitely. Either Party may terminate it one year after notice has been given to the other Party.

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